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EVENTS OF THE WEEK

THE Preparatory Commission met at Geneva on Wednesday, wondering uneasily what the Soviet delegates would propose. They had not to wait long. M. Litvinoff was one of the first to speak, and the proposal he put forward on behalf of the Soviet Government was no less than "the complete abolition of all forces on land, by sea, or in the air," a phrase to which he gave emphatic confirmation by a series of detailed clauses. The other delegations displayed no eagerness for the privilege of replying to this proposal, but eventually M. Paul-Boncour explained that

"security" must precede any such drastic measure of disarmament. This must have sounded unconvincing, for it is obvious that no greater contribution could be made to security than the abolition of armaments. But the Soviet had, as usual, overreached itself. A more moderate proposal would have been more embarrassing to the other members of the Conference, for it is clear that the Governments are not yet prepared for a substantial reduction in armaments; the most we can hope for in the immediate future is some measure of limitation. It would have been really disconcerting, therefore, if the Russians had made practicable suggestions.

* * *

As it is, the real answer to M. Litvinoff, which will be made in every country concerned, is that we do not believe the Russians really mean it. If they were sincere, they would not have approached the problem in this way at all. The road to disarmament lies through a general growth of the pacific spirit, and by joining and strengthening the League the Soviet Government could make a most valuable contribution towards that end. Short of that, it should be useful to have the Soviets represented on the Preparatory Commission, and, we hope, on the Disarmament Conference itself, if the Russians will consent to discuss practical details. Their presence should make for reality in the discussions, and it is possible that they may not be averse from armament limitation. The demand for the abolition of armaments is analogous to that for the abolition of capitalism with which the Soviets started. They are gradually modifying the latter project, and may perhaps be persuaded to adopt the Fabian method of progress towards the former.

* * *

The crisis between Poland, Lithuania, and Soviet Russia has its roots in the past, when the Powers acquiesced in the Polish seizure of Vilna. The Lithuanian Government has never admitted Poland's right to Vilna and, by way of protest, has never established ordinary diplomatic and commercial relations with Poland. During the last few weeks, the Polish Government has been exerting some kind of pressure on the Lithuanians. The details have been either suppressed by the censorship or distorted by rumour, which is a pity, for the action of the Polish Government is a matter of importance. This pressure provoked a note from the Soviet Government to Poland; and whatever the Polish Press may say to the contrary, this note was neither improper nor objectionable. It was merely a reminder that Lithuania could not defend herself, and an appeal to settle the matter amicably. Its sting lay, no doubt, in the implied suggestion that the Soviet Government desires to lay the foundations of a sort of Monroe doctrine in respect of the weak Succession States of Imperial Russia.

In reply to the Russian note, the Polish Government has stated its intention to submit the question to the League, and has instructed Marshal Pilsudski to go to Geneva in mufti and present the Polish case. The intentions of the Lithuanian Government are not so easy to discover, because the external crisis has produced an internal one. The Army is exercising pressure on the civil Government; the Ministers are threatening the agitating generals; and the stability or instability of the Valdemaras administration is difficult to calculate. None the less, M. Valdemaras has found time to say that he entirely approves of an appeal to the League. The immediate dangers of the situation are that Polish or Lithuanian frontier troops may do something silly, or that the corps of officers in Kovno may effect a *coup d'état*. The more distant, but graver danger is that the Soviet Government may regard the appeal to the League as an abrupt and discourteous refusal of their good offices, and avenge themselves on both parties by means of the Third International.

* * *

The defensive treaty between Italy and Albania can hardly have been negotiated since the Franco-Yugoslav treaty was signed; the time is too short. It must, therefore, be regarded as a codicil to the previous treaty of friendship, and perhaps an attempt to countermine French diplomacy in the Balkans, rather than as a direct reply to the Franco-Yugoslav treaty. That is the best that can be said for it. Nothing at all can be said for the provisions of the new treaty itself. It is the first, signed since the Armistice, which entirely supersedes the protective guarantees of the League by a definite unconditional promise of military protection from a large to a small State. Further, the promise of military assistance is reciprocal, and as Italy could not possibly use brigades of Albanian hillmen to defend her Continental frontier, the treaty constitutes Albania a sort of prætorian gate, through which Italian armies may march into the Balkans. Apart from its immediate Balkan reactions, the treaty sets up a most dangerous precedent; it is an incitement to small States to clamour for similar guarantees, whenever they compound a treaty of friendship with a Power stronger than themselves.

* * *

The Paris Press has received the treaty calmly, and the Belgrade Press, taking its cue from Paris, has been more restrained than might have been expected. It appears that the Belgrade Government intends to open direct conversations with Italy about the position in the Adriatic, as soon as M. Beaumarchais, the new French Ambassador, reaches Rome. The Yugoslav Premier, however, has stated that the time is not yet ripe for a Balkan Locarno, and it is difficult to see what the Yugoslavs expect to gain from the conversations. The only undertaking that would be of any use to them would be an undertaking to leave the construction of Albanian roads, and the development of Albanian ports, to domestic enterprise. The Italians are not likely to give any such promise, and we may expect to find that legitimate Italian enterprise in Albania is henceforth regarded, in the light of the treaty, as a danger to Yugoslavia. Every Italian sheep farm will be considered as a military outpost, every Italian engineer regarded as conducting a military reconnaissance. Meanwhile the Fascist Party has already issued an order sheet, reminding the League that it has no business with the treaty, except to register it.

* * *

The debate in the House of Commons on Thursday of last week revealed the many cross-currents on the questions of Disarmament and League Policy and the

great confusion of issues which obtains. The business was a Vote of Censure on the Government, tabled by the Labour Party; and it was, of course, the failure of the Coolidge Conference, Lord Cecil's resignation, and subsequent revelations, which provided the immediate occasion for the Vote of Censure. The Labour Party's motion was framed, however, on "omnibus" lines, touching on arbitration, security, and guarantees, as well as on disarmament. And Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, who moved it, devoted his speech almost entirely to urging the importance of "pooled security." Indeed, he went so far as to argue that disarmament conferences could not possibly succeed until the various nations felt "perfectly safe and perfectly secure," and thus, by implication, to defend the Government on every other count except that of its reluctance to supply "pooled" security to the anxious peoples of the Continent. His speech was studded with passages like the following:—

"The only chance this country has of coming to a real agreement with America... is that we and America together should take steps to remove the chances of war, because only when the chances of war are removed shall we be able to come to an agreement on naval questions."

"The failure that was registered at Geneva I take as one of those things that I should call a natural failure."

"It cannot be done unless we give a full security."

* * *

To answer this indictment, Sir Austen Chamberlain had only to restate the familiar objections to the Protocol, or to any extension of our warlike undertakings—an issue on which he is undoubtedly and very strongly supported by British public opinion as a whole. Indeed, he was able to pass over the question of Disarmament with a single reference to the charge of insufficient preparation, on which he observed with some pertinence that the charge was not very consistent with the attacks made on secret diplomacy. The main debate only began, therefore, after the lights had gone out, when Commander Kenworthy reviewed our naval policy in a very able speech, and Mr. Lloyd George urged the desirability of rationing firmly the expenditure of the fighting services. Even so, the Government's equivocal attitude towards the Coolidge Conference—which was the main count in Lord Cecil's indictment—was virtually ignored in the debate.

* * *

The House of Commons has been engaged this week in Committee on the Unemployment Insurance Bill. Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland has been singularly patient, or weak, and only five clauses of the Bill have been dealt with in six days. The Labour Party has obviously been playing the famous Parliamentary game of obstruction, and it is possible that the leniency of the Government towards these tactics has been influenced by their effect in postponing the vote of censure on Mr. Baldwin for his refusal to speak in the Coal debate. However that may be, patience is at last exhausted and, as we go to press, a guillotine resolution is being introduced. Three more days are to be allotted to the Committee stage, one to Report, and one to the third reading. The vote of censure is therefore postponed until next week, and the business of the House is likely to be highly congested in the days that remain before the Christmas recess.

* * *

The Prayer-Book Bill is to be introduced first in the House of Lords and debated there on December 12th, 13th, and 14th. Considerable uncertainty is felt as to its fate in that House, as there may be a great invasion of "Backwoodsmen" who have not been

seen there since the rejection of Mr. Lloyd George's famous budget. The opponents of the new Prayer-Book claim that 150 Peers will vote for its rejection. If the Bill survives it will come before the House of Commons on December 15th, and the unusual spectacle of Cabinet Ministers in opposition to one another will be witnessed. Mr. Bridgeman is sponsoring the Bill, and Sir William Joynson-Hicks is expected to move its rejection. The members who are against the Bill have elected an executive committee consisting of Sir William Joynson-Hicks, Mr. Walsh, Mr. Hopkin Morris, Sir Thomas Inskip, Mr. Rosslyn Mitchell, and Lord Curzon. The measure thus cuts right across the usual divisions; supporters and opponents being alike drawn from all three parties. By the terms of the Enabling Act, Parliament cannot amend the Bill; it must be accepted or rejected as it stands.

The disillusionment of the coal-owners with the idea that *laissez-faire* and intensive competition will solve the troubles of their industry, and their conversion to the necessity of a more organized system is proceeding rapidly. Following the example of South Wales, the coal-owners in Yorkshire, Notts, and Derbyshire are considering a scheme for regulating output, the details of which have not been divulged, and the general nature of which is somewhat obscure. According to a MANCHESTER GUARDIAN correspondent, "the outstanding feature of the scheme is the regulation of output—with coercion if necessary—to bring prices to an economic basis." The reference to reserve powers of coercion occurs, indeed, in all the forecasts of the scheme which we have read; as also does the suggestion that the scheme of control, whatever its precise nature, will be administered by a system of committees, under the chairmanship of independent persons, unconnected with the industry. From these features, it is evident that something quite ambitious is contemplated; and, though it is impossible to say anything about the desirability of the scheme, until its nature is more clearly known, it is at any rate a highly welcome fact that the owners should be giving their minds to constructive planning. We do not ourselves believe that the problem of the coal industry can now be solved without the intervention of the State, pressing forward a general scheme of reconstruction. The reference to coercion, indeed, in the Yorkshire project, implies the need for legislation. But, if the State is to step in at all, after all that has passed, it cannot confine itself to the passive function of giving the owners such powers as they desire. It must see to it that the industry is really put on a satisfactory basis.

Hitherto there has been no frontier incident in the wool textile industry despite the fact that diplomatic relations and all treaty obligations between employers and employed have now been broken off for a week: nor is there any sign that the employers are preparing a general offensive. Military metaphors are too often and too easily applied to industrial disputes, and the use of such terminology is usually to be deplored. But on this occasion we use it deliberately in order to emphasize the extremely serious nature of the present position in the West Riding's staple industry. If a single employer were to give notice of a wage reduction, the unions have made full preparations to treat the matter as a declaration of war, and in all probability a bitter struggle would ensue. They can hardly be blamed for their attitude since the whole principle of collective bargaining is at stake. If, as seems likely, the majority of the employers are doubtful as to whether a reduction of wages is so necessary as to be worth the

cost of a struggle, especially in view of the recent signs of some improvement in trade conditions, and if they want to wait a bit, then they ought to agree to the continuation of the old agreement for, say, another three months. This would not prejudice their ultimate action more than the present policy of indefinite postponement, and it would greatly relieve the present state of nervous tension with all its undesirable possibilities.

There is no reason to anticipate that President Coolidge, in his message to Congress on December 6th, will discuss any matters of special importance to Europe. American affairs are necessarily in suspense, with the presidential nominations only a half-year ahead. There is to be a further decrease of taxes, though on a less impressive scale than the reductions of recent years, while Mr. Coolidge will doubtless deal guardedly with the question of naval expenditure. The attention of Washington is once again occupied with the outlawing of war. Senator Capper of Kansas has announced his intention of introducing a resolution based upon M. Briand's suggestion that France and the United States should undertake to keep the peace for a hundred years. The Senator wants a series of treaties, binding the United States to boycott any aggressor-nation. Nothing can come of this. President Coolidge holds the view that such treaties would violate the constitution, for the power to declare war is vested in Congress and cannot be taken away. Senator Borah, champion of the doctrine of outlawing war, thinks that Senator Capper's plan would not be unconstitutional, but is sure that it would be impossible to fix the guilt of aggression. Hence, he argues, the only way is to make all war illegal. The Borah principle is continually discussed in America, but the Senate, obviously, could not do anything with it.

The Sultan of Koweit, who rules over territory on the North-Western corner of the Persian Gulf, near the Muhammerah pipe line, states that the Wahabi Sheikh of Bir es Safra is about to raid his country, and that he wishes the British Air Force in Iraq to assist him. As Ibn Saud cannot possibly be expected to keep all his sheikhs in order, and as the Sultan of Koweit is in special treaty relations with Great Britain, there is no legal reason why assistance should be withheld, and the Iraq Air Force might very probably be able to deal successfully with the Sheikh of Bir es Safra's marauders. The danger of these interventions is that European troops do not observe the laws of desert warfare—they win battles by killing their enemies instead of by seizing their camels—and a skirmish between Europeans and Bedouins is announced all over the Arabian peninsula as a prodigious and inhuman massacre. If the Air Force can repel the raid without seriously engaging the raiders, our good relations with Ibn Saud are not likely to be disturbed; but there is a real danger that he will be shocked and indignant if the raiders are fought and defeated in the European manner.

With the MANCHESTER GUARDIAN for Wednesday, November 30th, a remarkable Supplement on Industrial Relations was presented to all readers. To this, the Minister of Labour wrote a Foreword, and important articles were contributed by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Sir Alfred Mond, Mr. Citrine, Sir Josiah Stamp, Mr. Arthur Henderson, and many other leading authorities on various aspects of industrial relations. Altogether the Supplement is a valuable production, representing a notable achievement of enterprise combined with public spirit, and therefore highly characteristic of the MANCHESTER GUARDIAN.

MAKE THE COVENANT WORK

THE two meetings at Geneva—that of the Preparatory Commission on Disarmament this week, and that of the Council next week—are likely to prove of exceptional importance. The presence for the first time of Soviet representatives is enough, in itself, to lend a special interest to the former meeting. But the question of primary importance, on which this week's discussions should throw much light, is whether Disarmament is to be taken seriously at all, or whether the prevailing disposition will be, in effect, to sidetrack it, under cover of the plea that "security" must first be provided for, and to divert attention to the issues of arbitration and guarantees.

The Council will have before it next week some peculiarly important and difficult problems; notably, the relations of Poland and Lithuania, which have suddenly assumed a menacing aspect; and the Roumano-Hungarian controversy, which has been discussed in recent issues of this journal by Mr. Wilson Harris and Professor Undén. These are both problems of an intrinsic difficulty which may well tax the capacity of the Council to the utmost; and it is to be feared that the efficiency of the Council as an executive organ has been gravely impaired partly by the process of enlargement and reconstruction which it has recently undergone, and partly by other developments. There is far more reason than there was a few years ago to fear that the various members of the Council may be less concerned to uphold the League's authority than to grind the axes of their own countries. There is a strong and disquieting drift in the direction of partizanships and factions within the League. Within the present month we have seen the treaties between France and Yugoslavia on the one hand, and between Italy and Albania on the other, which are palpably directed against one another. This drift impairs seriously the cohesion and the disinterestedness of the Council.

From this unsatisfactory situation, a clear moral, as it seems to us, emerges. The great need of the present time is to work the Covenant properly, not to reconstruct it. No "gaps" in the Covenant are responsible for any of the thorny problems which have arisen. On the other hand, a considerable measure of responsibility must be attributed to the policy, which has been followed increasingly of late, and which is warmly defended by Sir Austen Chamberlain, of avoiding recourse to the League machinery, so long as it is possible to patch matters up somehow by the ordinary methods of diplomacy. The Albanian question illustrates this very clearly. The story of Albania has been essentially one of rivalry between Italy and Yugoslavia for the control of that nominally independent country; a rivalry pursued by such methods as fomenting internal revolutions with the assistance of armed bands from across the frontier, or directly seducing the existing ruler from the rival allegiance to your own. It is, indeed, one of the ironies of the present situation that Ahmed Zogu, who is now President, leaning on Italian support, and concluding treaties which make Albania something very like an Italian protectorate, owes his return to power to an insurrection of three years ago, which was supported from Yugoslavia.

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Now at various stages of this tangled story, when, owing to something that occurred, or the fear that something was about to occur, relations between Italy and Yugoslavia were more than usually strained, it has been reported that one party or another had decided to bring the matter before the League. But it has not come before the League. The Great Powers have at once exerted themselves, with an air of shocked propriety, to prevent such a development. The ordinary diplomatic methods have been brought to bear on the situation. Britain has urged Italy to be moderate and reasonable. France has urged Yugoslavia to be moderate and reasonable. Reassuring statements have been elicited. The tension has been relaxed; and the diplomatists have congratulated themselves on the success of these time-honoured methods. It was, if we remember rightly, largely with reference to the Albanian question that Sir Austen Chamberlain issued his rebukes to those who wish to make the League "a meddlesome Matty," interfering in delicate questions which ordinary diplomacy is competent to solve.

The increasing seriousness of the Albanian question is a measure of the short-sightedness of this policy. The diplomatists have patched up their temporary solutions, and the trouble has recurred, assuming each time a more formidable aspect, because no attempt has ever been made to go to the root of the matter, to clear up the facts, and to contrive arrangements which might prevent a recurrence of trouble. The essential difference between the technique which the League has evolved and the traditional technique of diplomacy is that the former is concerned to clear a matter up, and the latter to smooth it over. The first step with the League is to appoint an unquestionably competent and disinterested commission to investigate the matter thoroughly, to establish the facts, and to make recommendations. After this has been done, the matter comes before the Council, which may be swayed by every sort of consideration; but, if the commission of inquiry has done its work well, the Council is not likely to go far astray. And no better-founded claim can be made on behalf of the League of Nations than that its commissions of inquiry do their work very well indeed. They really are capable, they really are disinterested. The Report of the Mosul Commission is an example of the high standard that has been established.

The hopes which we place in the League of Nations depend to a very large extent on the virtues of this technique of thoroughgoing, impartial, preliminary investigation. The question whether or not the League will gradually gain in authority and prestige depends, more than on anything else, on a recognition of the virtues of this technique, and a determination to apply it *in good time* to all questions which contain the seeds of serious international discord. We say "*in good time*." When a dispute has reached what we may term the last degree of gravity, when there is an imminent danger of armed conflict, involving important Powers, when States are arrayed in opposing factions, deeply committed to partizanship on the matter in dispute, our faith in the efficacy of the League is, frankly, small. In such an atmosphere, dispassionate investi-

gation, disinterested pronouncement are impossible. In such a situation, the one object is and must be to avert war, to smooth over the situation somehow, anyhow; and for this function we are sceptical as to whether the League is greatly superior to traditional diplomacy. The virtue of traditional diplomacy is that it is highly skilled at smoothing over an ugly situation, its vice is that it so seldom tries to do anything else. In other words, diplomacy is at its best at the crisis of a dispute, at its worst when the trouble is brewing; whereas it is when the trouble is brewing that the advantages of the League technique are at their height. It is precisely therefore when it is still clearly within the ability of diplomacy to smooth over a question somehow, that it is most important to insist that the League shall be brought in, so that we may have the question cleared up, and not merely patched up. To call it in only when diplomacy has failed is to confront it with an almost hopeless task.

The Polish-Lithuanian trouble emphasizes very much the same moral. At the root of that trouble lies, of course, the question of Vilna. The seizure of Vilna by General Zeligovski in 1920, in defiance of an Armistice convention, signed two days previously under pressure from the League, the play-acting by which the Polish Government ostensibly repudiated General Zeligovski's action, although they had expressly ordered him to seize the town, as Marshal Pilsudski has since avowed, nay, boasted, the failure of the League to assert its authority against this flagrant defiance, and its ultimate acceptance of the territorial situation established by this means, constitute one of the most discreditable chapters in the post-war history of Europe. This happened, it is true, in the early years of the League's life, when boundaries were still undefined and fighting was still taking place over a large part of Europe; and during this period of peculiar difficulty, the League achieved many striking successes which may fairly be set off against this deplorable failure. No complaint, certainly, can be made against the influence exerted by the British Government of the day. None the less, the fact that Polish-Lithuanian relations are still strained, illustrates the practical disadvantages of solutions which take no account of right and represent merely the line of least resistance.

It also illustrates, in our judgment, the other half of our moral. In seizing Vilna, Poland ostensibly committed no act of war. Did she not disavow the action of General Zeligovski? And in thus covering an act of aggression with some easily contrived camouflage, the seizure of Vilna is likely, we think, to prove typical of such aggressions as may occur in future. The Vilna incident illustrates, in short, the essential futility of the search for "automatic" tests of aggression, such as were embodied in the Protocol. It is indispensable to judge the circumstances of each case as it arises. Automatic tests might prove, as Sir Austen Chamberlain well observed last week, "a trap for the innocent and a signpost for the guilty."

No; what is important in League policy is not to improve on the Covenant, but to use it in good time.

THE INDIAN COMMISSION

THE Simon Commission on the Indian Constitution being now formally launched, we are in a position to make a provisional estimate of the Government's scheme, though not as yet to judge accurately of the nature of Indian public opinion upon the Commission and its task. The Prime Minister, summing up the debate on November 25th, made a characteristic appeal for the co-operation of all parties and communities in India; and, since there had been no opposition in the House except from a few Left Wing members of the Labour Party, his only concern was to assure the House that the Government's intention was to secure the fullest possible approach to equality between the Commission and the proposed Committee of the Indian Legislative Assembly. Mr. Baldwin, to be sure, had almost nothing of his own to contribute, and it was a rather curious confession of helplessness for him to fall back upon a long extract from Sir John Simon's expository letter to his constituents. From both sections of the Opposition, and in both Houses, there had come criticisms of the Government on account of its failure to make any preliminary statement of policy or take any steps towards the conciliation of the Indian political leaders in advance. To those criticisms the Prime Minister and Lord Birkenhead had no serious reply to make; but Mr. Baldwin at all events made it plain that the Government's plan of consultation in India is free from any thought of treating the Indian Legislature as an inferior body.

It was, however, the leader of the Labour Party who provided the best defence of the Parliamentary Commission, while at the same time he indicated the line of its proper activity, as a committee of the Imperial Parliament co-operating on equal terms with the Parliament of India. The Secretary of State in the Lords and the Under-Secretary in the Commons both spent a good deal of time over their demonstration of the advantages of a purely Parliamentary Commission. Their arguments amounted to very little. Mr. MacDonald was more convincing, for the reason that he was himself a member of the mixed Royal Commission upon the Indian Public Services fifteen years ago. His experience during the harassed lifetime of that body led him to the decided conclusion that from a mixed Commission on the Constitution there could not be obtained a report upon which Parliament would be able to proceed. On the contrary, there would inevitably be a series of reports, including in all probability a dissenting minute from each of the considerable Indian minorities. The Simon Commission should at least afford a safeguard against any such impracticable result as that, and Mr. MacDonald pleaded that the Indian Legislative Assembly should be left altogether free to determine whether it should prepare a separate report or not.

The most important question at the present stage is that involved in the attitude of the leaders of the various Indian parties. The announcement of the Commission was met with an outcry of singular bitterness and apparent unanimity. The Indian Press seems to have been taken by surprise. Some of the Indian leaders had allowed it to be inferred that they were expecting the Government, following the line of least resistance, to appoint a large "representative" Royal Commission, from which, as a matter of fact, they would have admitted that there was nothing to be looked for beyond the confusion described by Mr. MacDonald. But in any case there can be no difference of opinion as to the anger with which the announcement of the Commission was received. It was so widespread that the Swarajist leaders were probably justi-

fied in their first inference that their resolution to boycott the Commission would be backed up by all the important political organizations of the country. That inference, however, cannot be maintained to-day. The representative bodies in India are already revealing their natural differences of view. The divisions of opinion so far declared are in part geographical, in part racial and social. Thus, Bombay takes the lead in a move towards co-operation with the Commission, while Bengal is in violent antagonism. The merchants of Bombay, the Moslems of Western India, and associations representing some of the disinherited classes of Hinduism have adopted resolutions welcoming the Commission and pledging their aid. It is anticipated that the great majority in the All-India Moslem League will declare in favour. It will be a matter for surprise if the Sikhs and other important though relatively small minorities do not take the same line.

The hostility of the Swarajists was never in doubt. The Government was compelled to take it for granted. Nor, indeed, is there much cause for surprise in the tactics of those leaders and groups that stand somewhat to the right of the Swarajists. The most influential leader of this section is Pundit M. M. Malaviya, who in the last election organized a new party of the Left Centre. He is not only in active alliance with the Swarajists against the Commission, but is making use of this opportunity for the calling of a special Conference with the aim of bringing about a complete reunion of the National Congress in advance of the annual session at the end of December. Pundit Malaviya may succeed in his manœuvre, for there are common-sense reasons for the fusion. Ever since the Gandhi Non-co-operation programme was abandoned, and membership of the Legislative Councils agreed to by the Swarajists, the various elements of what was once the Indian Nationalist Party have been drawing together, and it is likely enough that Lord Birkenhead has reunited them. But hostility to the Commission is forcing into coalition with the Swarajists many of those Indian Liberals who have worked with the Government during the eight years since the drafting of the Montagu-Chelmsford Constitution. The Parsee political leaders of Bombay, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, who has sat as Indian representative in Imperial Conferences, Mr. C. Y. Chintamani, a former Minister of the United Provinces, and others of their kind are in downright opposition, evidently no less resolute than the Swarajists in pushing on the boycott policy. "We remain unconvinced and unrepentant; we will have nothing to do with the Commission." So declares Mr. Chintamani's paper, the *LEADER* of Allahabad. These words were written after the summaries of the Prime Minister's and Lord Birkenhead's speeches had been cabled to India. We must therefore accept them as representing, not a hasty, but a considered judgment upon a momentous matter.

More than once in the three years since he went to the India Office Lord Birkenhead has offered a challenge to the Indian parties and leaders. Their demand—a perfectly proper demand—is for a Constitution made, not at Westminster, but in India. Lord Birkenhead says in effect, "If India were to produce such a Constitution, the result of agreement among her own communities, how could the Imperial Parliament reject it?" To that challenge, coming from a Conservative Secretary of State, the Indian leaders reply with the threat of a policy which, if persisted in, can have only one certain result—the hardening of the communal strife that alone prevents the emergence of a free self-governing India.

MUST WE SCRAP DEMOCRACY?

By J. A. HOBSON.

THE current attitude of liberal-minded men towards Democracy is one of embarrassment. In some countries where popular representative government has been tried it has broken down, as in Italy and Spain; other countries, after throwing off their old autocracies, have failed to take on even the semblance of Democracy, as Russia and China. In others, again, where the forms of popular government are retained, as in parts of Eastern Europe and South America, elections are either "made" by Governments or are displaced by revolutionary forces. Even in countries where the will of the people works with a fair amount of freedom through the electoral machinery, as in Britain, France, and the United States, that will seems to exert but a slight and precarious influence upon the actual course of government. The doubts expressed by Lord Bryce as to the feasibility of any real democracy, except in a few of the smaller European countries, such as Switzerland and Scandinavia, seem amply warranted by the course of current events in all parts of the world.

In Britain, where representative government took its rise, this criticism has been sharpened by the urgency of India. We are pledged to hand over the government of India to the people of that country, and we are confronted with the early redemption of that pledge. Until lately Englishmen of liberal traditions were easy in their minds about that obligation. Self-government by representative institutions was no British monopoly; it was a general principle of human society, applicable at any rate to all people reaching a decent level of civilization. It was the road which all progressive peoples were bound to take. This was the liberal creed not only in Britain but throughout the civilized world. Now hesitation has set in. Supporters of democracy are fumbling for excuses. Democracy, some of them say, has never yet been fairly tried—just as they say of Christianity when precept is awkwardly confronted with practice. More education is required that the will of the people may function effectively. Or better representative institutions are needed, proportionate representation, the referendum and initiative, to strengthen and give vitality to the voting processes.

But others among our "advanced" thinkers accept the failure of democracy as an established truth. They want to get good government some other way. Mr. Wells is, *par excellence*, our quick-change artist in high thinking, and "William Clissold" scraps lightly all our political institutions, plumping for a self-imposing expert government of scientific and business experts, who will do the job for us efficiently. Nor is there any hesitation about Mr. Bernard Shaw. The Fabian Society, of which he is the most distinguished member, has always been careful to separate its Socialism from the democratic brand, by insisting upon the manipulation of the wandering will of the many by the competent few. But they generally gave lip-service to democracy. Now Mr. Shaw comes forward with an uncompromising repudiation of "Democracy as a delusion." Carefully heralded by a Press controversy in which he assumes the rôle of defender of Mussolini, Mr. Shaw comes forward to expose the nest of fallacies and follies that has duped the liberalism of three centuries.

Government of the people is necessary, government for the people possible, government by the people is a permanent impossibility. Such is his thesis. Political demo-

cracy rests in the basic assumption that the unit citizen is "a microcosm of the State," and has all the wisdom which the State requires. It also assumes that everyone of these unit citizens, born free and equal, wants to exercise, directly, or through his instructed representative, the various powers of government, to make laws, control defence, finance, police, and other services, and administer the laws he has made. Now quite evidently he does not want to exercise these powers, and recognizes his incompetence to do so. The ordinary man, argues Mr. Shaw, "only wants to know what to do," and is always prepared to accept an authority, an autocrat, who will tell him. He doesn't mind whether the autocrat imposes himself forcibly, or through a "conscious minority," or whether some formality of election is gone through. The natural man craves a despotism. His highest ideal points this way. Did any people in forming their religion ever set up a Democratic God? Absolute authority is in the very blood of the common people. They crave, not the right to do their share in government, but a leader whom they may follow, and who will relieve them of the intolerable task of thinking for themselves. This is why in all elections the voter votes for men, not measures. He wants a strong leader, that he may be safe and lazy. If, however, that were all, no real problem would arise. The ordinary natural man, who has accepted or even chosen a governor, does not like government in its concrete pressures and interferences. He does not like policemen, inspectors, tax-collectors, and what they represent. Temperamentally he is an anarchist, or, as Mr. Shaw would say, a Liberal, for a consistent Liberal, as Mr. Shaw sees him, must cut down government to its barest minimum. So Democracy becomes a liberal asset, associated not with positive government, but with resistance to government.

Now, since the people need government of a positive, elaborate, and expert order, it follows from Mr. Shaw's assumptions that the people cannot choose their government. The people have no initiative, no creative or constructive will or power. Therefore the dictator, or oligarchy, that alone can and does govern, must impose itself either by "humbugging the electors," a dubious and demoralizing process, or by more manly methods of coercion. Liberty is what the people desire, but what they ought to desire is discipline! Authoritative Socialism, based upon absolute equality of incomes, abolition of private property, and compulsory labour, is Mr. Shaw's conception of positive government, and he sees no chance of squaring that with Democracy. Not that he would deny any function to the ordinary citizen. His function is to squeal when the shoe (which he has not ordered) pinches. If he squeals loud enough, long enough, and in large enough company, the expert government will recognize the misfit and repair it. That is all it comes to. The people have not, and cannot have, any positive influence in determining their political destiny. A majority of the electorate and of their chosen representatives may sometimes try to force their will in some matter of critical importance, but it will meet the fate which befell the Home Rule Bill of 1914 at the hands of a determined resistant minority. Home Rule was eventually won by force, not by democratic machinery. Mr. Shaw ended his exposure by hinting, not darkly, that any attempt by a victorious Labour Party to drive through Parliament any drastic policy hostile to the entrenched interests of the minority would again upset the constitutional apple-cart. Therefore, as a lover of peaceable constitutional methods, he pleaded with his audience of London intellectuals for an open abandonment of Democracy.

Mr. Shaw's latest attitude is for some a conscious superiority moving towards senile reactionism. For others it is a sadistic pleasure in the consternation of his followers. Others, again, see in it Mr. Shaw's famous sword-dancing, his pride of paradox—a charge which he forestalls by claiming to be the sole owner of a normal vision, the only one who sees things as they really are. But has he plain sight, or only plain speech? His great gift, as it seems to me, is his supreme quality of lucid expression. And this is often his undoing, as in this tirade against democracy, when he exposes his bundle of half-truths to the naked glare of day.

Take his leading points. It is not true that democracy demands a citizen who is a complete microcosm of the State. It merely demands one who has some contribution, however small, to make from his unique experience to the common stock, and some sense, however imperfect, of the common good. Mr. Shaw denies any such qualifications to the common folk, whom he seems to see, with Burke, as "the swinish multitude." How can they handle politics, who neither know what they want nor how to get it? But is the electorate this single, inert, ignorant mass? This is the fallacy of simplification. Every electorate consists of many grades and sorts of intelligence and public spirit. There is commonly a large indifferent minority, that does not count, or vote. But this does not impair the rights or efficacy of demos. In every electorate there are groups of politically minded persons, with constructive as well as critical minds, helping to form a public opinion upon concrete policies, which influence, if they do not closely mould, the actions of Governments. Behind these intelligent groups stand large masses of party adherents, whose views and sympathies are less the product of independent thinking than of the drift of interests or traditional attachments. But this drift is not entirely blind or ignorant. As political education spreads (and it is spreading) there is a growing number of electors who choose their party with some consciousness of why they do so. There are marked and distinguishable dispositions of mind in an electorate, focusing on definite issues with an appeal. Nor is it the case that demos votes for men, ignoring measures. Still less is it true that his natural craving is for a despot, monarch, dictator, or Prime Minister. No doubt a Napoleon or a Mussolini may at a critical juncture capture the imagination of the crowd. But history affords no evidence that he can hold it. The normal mind of democracy does not give blank cheques to tyrants. Even to suggest that any party in this country reposes blind confidence in any leader is a transparent absurdity. The importance of leadership is undeniable. Everyone agrees that initiative is not equally distributed, and that in every group, or society, a few will assert themselves in positive proposals and the many will accept or reject. Democracy is permeated with this leadership at every level: it is essential to its healthy functioning. But this does not imply the inertia of the masses. The choice, acceptance, and following of leaders, has a positive character. Nor can leaders assert their leadership by what is called "sheer personality." They must at least undertake to deliver "the goods," must make their appeal effective by attractive measures.

But that is not all the positive quality that lies in popular self-government. There is something more than passive assent or consent, something more than Mr. Shaw's veto, or a kicking over the traces. Risking the charge of political mysticism, I would insist upon the reality and importance of a certain natural wisdom of the people. You may rate it no higher than a self-protective instinct, an element of horse or herd sense, a drift of tendency

in the right direction, though something short of the American "manifest destiny." If you are a philosopher of the Lloyd-Morgan, Alexander school, you may regard it as a particular mode of "the directive activity" in the universe, making for the evolution of higher forms. But I think this common sense, derived from the similar organic structure and the similar experience of members of a group or people, does operate as a sound political influence. So far as it gathers knowledge and some clarity of consciousness, it acquires a positive value, stimulating movement in certain directions, seizing certain ideas which leaders have initiated, and pushing them towards realization. The conscious planning of a few active executive statesmen does not explain adequately the evolution of representative government in this country, or the new forms of internationalism that are in the making. Though "the people" cannot draft a Bill or negotiate a foreign treaty, they can make themselves fairly articulate on lines of policy directly affecting their interests. In no other way is it possible to explain how the democratic institutions which Mr. Shaw would scrap or ignore, have come into existence. History shows them as a series of concessions, rather than as a thought-out scheme of statecraft. But concessions to what? To a demand from ever-growing sections of the people for a real voice in their government.

If Mr. Shaw designed to deal a death-blow to his cause of Socialism in this country, his championship of discipline against liberty was well calculated to serve his purpose. Most British Socialists (Mr. Webb, for instance, in the lecture preceding that of Mr. Shaw) have presented Socialism not as crushing individual liberty, but as enlarging it, by removing the barriers which poverty, ignorance, social and other disabilities place upon personal freedom. The self-appointed despots of a "corporative State," like Mussolini, eager to "trample on the putrefying corpse of liberty," and to impose iron discipline upon the workers of Lancashire and Yorkshire would have a tough job to establish or to exercise their power. And that for the reason that liberty is not the negative or merely negligible thing it seems to Mr. Shaw, but a name for that very positive virtue of initiative which he denies to the common people. There is a real problem of democracy, how to find the best use and expression for this free initiative, this creative energy of the people, within the political machine so as to give general direction to the policies which experts must frame and administer. There is, indeed, a set of problems in securing the best adjustments between the electorate, the representative, the Government, and the various orders of paid officials. But these problems have no concern for the executioner of democracy.

One point of psychological interest remains. Mr. Shaw is by many avowals and committals a humanitarian. Moreover, he has been a persistent, nay, a reckless, combatant of scientific expertism in the field of medicine and elsewhere. All his life he has been a self-chartered libertine in every field of controversy (and they are many) into which he has thrust himself. Why now does he espouse the brutalitarian cause? Why does he claim for politics a scientific expertism and an authoritarianism which he questions in fields of far exacter knowledge? And why does he wish to deprive others (the common people!) of the liberty in work and life which he has always claimed for himself and practised? He must be well aware that a Mussolini would make short shrift of such a disturber of the intellectual peace as Bernard Shaw in Fascist England. Is he making friends with the Mammon of unrighteousness that, when the Fascist State comes here, he may get a personal exemption, for services rendered?

CHARLES MASTERMAN: A TRIBUTE

[We publish below, at the suggestion of some of those who heard it, an appreciation of the late Mr. Masterman by Mr. E. H. Gilpin, which was delivered to the National Liberal Club Literary Circle on November 25th.—Ed., NATION.]

CHARLES MASTERMAN, President of our Literary Circle, is in all our thoughts to-night.

He gave our Circle of his best; for not only did he perform the regular duties of his office, but, in his unpremeditated incursions into our discussions he exposed to us some of the magic of his intimate talk. The Circle was too large for us to get the full magic. That was displayed only round some study fire with Masterman humped awkwardly in the longest and deepest of easy chairs.

What talk it was! Gay, allusive, provocative, libellous—and, as the shadows lengthened, cynical; for cynicism was the armour he wore against the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. We heard enough of it here, however, to learn something of the manysidedness of the man. Journalist, student of history, man of letters, a politician almost without rival, Parliament man, administrator; he was all these. And yet his career was flecked with tragedy. He was a great man, to whom the rewards of greatness were denied.

There was only one that he really wanted—Parliament. It was the denial of that which hurt him most. Only a few weeks ago he lifted the vizor of his armour to me for a single instant and his passion for Parliament flamed in his eyes and in his voice; "The greatest place in the world," he said; "the only life to live." It was not only the Parliamentary scene that he loved, though no one enjoyed it more or could describe it with such brilliant intuition. It was not the Parliamentary friendships, though he made them with a great catholicity and kept them through the changing years. It was the High Court of Parliament that meant most to him; the Court before which "the condition of England question" was continuously pleaded, the cause of the oppressed upheld. For he loved Parliament as a Liberal.

This is neither the time nor the place for a full appreciation; but there is one other side to Charles Masterman's character to which I must refer. Youth called to him and he to youth; and no one who has not seen him with boys knows the heights of comradeship to which he could rise.

Charles Masterman is dead; his gay courage, his loyalty, his learning—these remain to us, a memory and an incentive. It is with them in mind that I ask you now to stand in silence and to pay to the man who made them live for us the tribute (so inadequate) of our great regard.

E. H. GILPIN.

LIFE AND POLITICS

I SPENT some hours at the War Danger Conference without deriving much from it except depression. It is all very well to be alert to the alarms of war, and goodness knows there are plenty of causes of disquiet. I think that it is not at all a bad thing to give the man in the street a salutary fright. There is, at the same time, hope at Geneva; there, indeed, is the only hope. It does not help at all, besides being so exaggerated as to be misleading, to call the League "an outside show" in which "dictatorial powers participate only so that they may wreck it," still less to describe the League as a den of international thieves. This last quotation is from the speech of a sturdy Left

Winger who proposed, as the alternative to national wars, general domestic civil wars of peace parties against Governments. Such bloodthirsty pacifism I never listened to before. Mad logic of this kind can only discredit the very serious and hopeful new spirit that is beginning to drive the nations to Geneva in mere self-preservation to find a way out. Soon after I left the Hall, full of what Dr. Johnson would call "inspissated gloom," I met a man who said something which seemed to me to be worth all the eloquence I had endured. He was a Conservative, known to me as taking a cynical view of the League. "I am beginning," he said, "to think there is something in your League of Nations." I asked what had enlightened him. "Why," he said, "look at this new mess in North-East Europe. What a mercy it has happened just when the League is meeting and can deal with it. If there was no League, God knows what would happen."

* * *

The "scene" during the debate on the Unemployment Insurance Bill when Mr. Maxton and others were suspended is old history now. It was treated in the papers as a joyous and spontaneous shindy, and I only return to it to bring out the fact that the row was not provoked by a trifle. An important point was involved in the debate that was cut short by the Chair and afterwards forgotten in the free use by Labour of unparliamentary language. As so often happens the real criticism had been made by a Liberal member—in this case Mr. Ernest Brown—and the Labour members, their attention having been roused to what they had missed, rushed in to make the most of it for themselves. As everyone knows, the basis of the Bill, that is to say its finances as governed by the actual state of unemployment, is uncertain and shifting. No one knows what the position will be, one, two, or five years hence. The Bill appears to give the Minister the power, in the event of important changes in the amount of unemployment, of radically altering the scheme by changing the rate of contributions. The Liberal amendment aimed at taking this power out of the hands of the Minister, and vesting it in the House of Commons, which would review the scheme on the evidence produced by a thorough actuarial investigation, held every three years. The Bill proposes a sort of departmental investigation every five years. This, very roughly, was the question at issue. The Liberal proposal was thoroughly democratic and sensible. Labour members, realizing that the Liberals were once more getting in first with a good criticism, at once rained in a series of amendments of their own. Before there could be any proper discussion of the quite substantial point thus raised, the Chair accepted the closure and bottled up the whole thing. Mr. Maxton said that this was "damned unfair." That it *was* unfair was by no means the opinion of the Labour members alone.

* * *

The result of the Canterbury election was an unpleasant surprise for the Conservatives. I was in Canterbury a few days before the polling, and found that the Tories were quite confident that they would increase Lord Cushendun's last majority. Instead, the majority slumped down by six thousand. The number of voters was about the same as in 1924, but three thousand electors who voted Tory then voted Liberal last week, and this in a constituency always regarded as one of the steadiest and safest in the country. What is the meaning of it? An important cause was unquestionably the disgust of the farmers at the cynical treatment that they have received from Mr. Baldwin and his Government. Farmers as a whole may not be very acute politically, but they know on what side their bread is buttered, and they are well aware that Mr. Baldwin has buttered neither one side nor the other. They

know that he promised them *something* before the last general election, and that they have got nothing. The Tory candidate failed altogether to explain away this uncomfortable fact, and we had the unusual spectacle of farmers working and speaking for the Liberal. The Tory calculation that while farmers may grumble they will always vote for the party is not always sound. The farmers in North-East Kent have been provoked to give their serious attention to the Liberal land policy, and many of them certainly have found that it has its attractions. The aspect of the election which struck me even more forcibly was this. The Liberal candidate, Colonel Carnegie, while he did not neglect agricultural policy, was specifically a peace candidate. He concentrated his attack on the Government upon their manifest failures to take the lead in Europe on disarmament and security. One might suppose that a League of Nations programme would have little chance in a constituency of country towns and farms. The opposite proved to be the case. I was told by Colonel Carnegie that even in little village meetings there was evidenced a genuine alarm about the drift towards another war. I hope Sir Austen will not disdain to look at the Canterbury figures and reflect upon them.

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The notices that I have seen of Sir Robert Hudson hardly do justice to the importance of his pervasive work through so many years in moulding official Liberal opinion. His importance in this respect may have been somewhat overlooked from the fact that he never or rarely spoke on the political platform. The National Liberal Federation was created to focus Liberal opinion in the country or, as it were, to give a lead to the leaders. Hudson was Secretary to the N.L.F., but he exercised his greatest influence as the private adviser on policy and tactics to the chief men, and in later years the Federation came increasingly to follow the lines laid down by them largely under his guidance. As an administrator, Hudson was the inheritor of the Schnadhorst tradition. His shrewd judgment served the party well through the crises of forty years. He had a superlative gift for managing difficult people, and lessening the impact of colliding personalities. This faculty was most usefully employed by him during the war years when he ran the Red Cross organization at the request of the Government. He made peace between the two competitive bodies, prevented overlapping, and created a wonderfully efficient machine out of waste and confusion. It was Hudson's impressive efficiency at this job that won for him the admiration of Northcliffe, who once said that he could now understand the triumph of the Liberal Party in 1906. As a speaker Hudson reserved himself for literary circles, like the Johnson Club and the Omar Khayyam Club, where his after-dinner speeches displayed an amusing originality and a whimsical wit.

* * *

A friend whose knowledge of American affairs is much greater than mine reproaches me for the tone of my comments last week on the "blackwashing" of George Washington by Mr. Rupert Hughes. His point is that I should have been better occupied if, instead of complaining of the vigour of Mr. Hughes's denigration of the hero, I had pointed out how necessary it is that something of the kind should be done. I confess I had supposed that the patriotic worship of plaster heroes was largely confined to Big Bill Thompson and his Chicago enthusiasts. This, I am assured, is by no means the case. In even larger and presumably more intelligent centres, the pressure upon writers and historians to support the popular legend of a perfect George Washington is severe and continuous. All the more then should we applaud the courage of a writer, however extravagant, who tries to humanize with a few

failings the stock figure handed down like an idol from the early days. This form of intolerant benevolence in America is not easy for us to understand, for, of course, we in this country have an equally bigoted desire to exhibit not only the feet but the whole body of our heroes as made of clay. If a few insignificant virtues are allowed them by the modern school, it is often by oversight or in a footnote, and the impression left by our ruthless cynics is that no one has ever done anything of importance or is likely to do, who has not run through all the vices and invented a few for himself.

* * *

While I was in Canterbury last week I spent a happy hour renewing memories of the Cathedral and its incomparable precincts. I came upon no other sightseer that winter day, and roamed about the mighty place in the mood of a discoverer. There are one or two things in which Canterbury is an example to the authorities of our great churches. One is the freedom to wander everywhere without the vexatious necessity of paying for entrance to the choir, which always seems to reduce a national possession to the level of a peepshow. Another excellent thing is the provision of descriptive and historical notices, well written in both senses, placed on the chief monuments, as a welcome substitute for the prosings of a guide. These notices tell the visitor just what he wants to know until he has time to run over again such a book as that little masterpiece of its kind, Dean Stanley's "Memorials." Best of all is the society that has been recently formed called Friends of Canterbury Cathedral, the most practical expression that I know of the idea that these famous buildings are everyman's possession, and that it is the concern of all to watch over them. One becomes a "friend" of Canterbury Cathedral by paying a small subscription, and people who make the pilgrimage from all over the world may in this way keep up a living link with the fortunes of the church, and have an interest not only in keeping it up, but in preventing any unwise interference with its beauty.

* * *

I am sorry to hear that Sir Thomas Beecham's scheme for running opera with the help of opera lovers is hanging fire. If it fails there will be no escape from the conclusion that there is no public in this country for fine opera—a paradoxical conclusion, for nearly always when Sir Thomas Beecham or the B.N.O.C. give performances they are crammed to the doors. It is incredible that there are not 150,000 people willing to subscribe twopence a week for five years to ensure opera seasons in the great cities, under a man who has shown his own enthusiasm for the cause by spending a fortune upon it, and who is a great musician. The truth seems to be that people are so accustomed to receiving music as a gift from above, mysteriously provided, that they are slow to believe that this invitation to subscribe their pennies is now the only hope of the continuance of opera at all. It is now known that the B.N.O.C. will be forced to go out of business in the spring. Grand opera in this country does not pay, and is not possible without subsidy in some form. It is necessary in organizing opera to engage singers and orchestra at least two years ahead. The slow response to the appeal is probably due to nothing but laziness and inertia, and I hope, for the credit of England, that this last chance of establishing opera will not be lost.

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When recently the lights went out in the House of Commons I was reminded of the report in a local paper of a failure of the lighting during a service in church. "By a curious coincidence," it said, "the congregation was not singing 'Lead, Kindly Light,' at the time." But on this occasion all was in order. Commander Kenworthy was speaking.

KAPPA.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MASTERMAN AND MORANT

SIR,—A. G. Gardiner's tribute to Charles Masterman in THE NATION of November 26th shows a deep and sympathetic insight into his brilliant ability and rare charm which those who were privileged to work with him will appreciate. But it hardly seems to do full justice to one period of Masterman's career which earned for him the deep respect of all the Civil Servants and others who came into contact with him. When he was appointed Head of the Insurance Commission, Masterman was confronted with a task of administrative construction probably greater and more difficult than any that had faced a Minister for generations. Associated with him was the ablest, and certainly the most masterful Civil Servant of his generation, Sir Robert Morant, whose restless zeal for the public service had dominated a succession of Presidents of the Board of Education. There were inevitably many occasions when the Minister and the Civil Servant held divergent views on difficult questions of policy and administration. Masterman certainly kept his end up—no easy matter against so strenuous a fighter as Morant. There were many occasions also on which together they found themselves fighting powerful vested interests in the great insurance companies and friendly societies, and the new Department had more than its share of difficulties, not only with Parliament, but also with the older Departments of State, who viewed the newcomer with suspicion, if not with jealousy. In this difficult position, Masterman showed a tenacity of will and an administrative skill which certainly surprised his friends, and which contributed immensely to the great administrative success rapidly achieved by the Commission.

It is hard to say to whom the greater credit was due, to the brilliant intellect and wise political judgment of the Minister, or the restless energy of the Civil Servant. Together they provided an administrative combination which was probably as strong as any that has ever headed a public department.

When the war came, the great organization they had built up was able to spare most of its chief officials for work of the most responsible kind elsewhere. It was one of the tragedies of the war that neither of the two men at the top were ever used afterwards to the full extent of their powers. Bad electoral luck crippled Masterman. An early death prevented Morant from completing his work at the Ministry of Health, for whose inception he was largely responsible. But, to some of us, the work that they did together on the Insurance Commission will rank as one of the most brilliant contributions to public administration in this or any country.—Yours, &c.,

E. F. WISE.

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

SIR,—P.R. is commonly advocated as a cure for the disproportionate representation of opinion in the House of Commons; but no change in the method of recording votes will of itself do much to remove that anomaly. Disproportionate results constantly occurred before the days of three-cornered contests. Reform, to be effective, must involve the abolition of single-member constituencies.

With single-member constituencies it is logically conceivable that every seat may be won by the same party by a majority of only one vote, resulting in a solid one-party House of Commons, returned by an electorate almost equally divided for and against. This would be a *reductio ad absurdum*, and can, of course, be ruled out; but we already see a House of Commons in which one party has secured over two-thirds of the seats at an election in which more votes were cast against than for it.

We should certainly get a House of Commons corresponding scientifically with opinion in the country by making the whole of Great Britain one constituency and adopting P.R.; and probably by no other means. But a fairly exact microcosm of the country would probably be produced by dividing it into, say, 120 constituencies returning, say, five members each. This would mean (once the "flappers" are enfranchised) nearly 200,000 voters per seat. If such a redistribution were carried out, P.R. would follow naturally as the only reasonable method of recording preferences.

Nothing less than such a change of system would eliminate grave disproportion in representation: and historically our system of election has been based upon local interests and not population. It is therefore to a fundamental change that advocates of P.R. have to convert the public, and I suggest that in arguing their case they do not as a rule address themselves sufficiently to this aspect of it.—Yours, &c.,

ERIC MACFADYEN.

[We publish this letter since it is possible that the misapprehension it contains may be widely shared. The abolition of the single-member constituency is, of course, of the essence of P.R.; and five- or six-member constituencies are precisely what the exponents of P.R. propose.—ED., NATION.]

SIR,—Your declaration—that the whole question [electoral reform] deserves more searching and thorough discussion—is very welcome. As a contribution to this discussion, the P.R. Society has translated many electoral laws and has published accounts, often based on personal observation, of elections in which these laws have been applied. Moreover, as the method of voting has an important bearing upon other problems of representative government, the P.R. Society, within the limits of its means, has published studies of the formation and maintenance of government where no one party has a majority of the seats in Parliament. We believe that through exact study, employing to the full the comparative method, we shall secure that method of voting which meets most adequately the needs of representative government.

Owing to its very limited resources, the work done by the Society is far from complete, but in respect of all its publications great care is taken to ensure accuracy of statement. This pioneer research work should be pursued in the Universities. Indeed, so important is the part which the method of voting plays in the shaping of political history within self-governing countries that the courses of lectures on methods of election within the Universities and the Schools of Political Science should be more numerous and more adequate.

The discussion which you have initiated is of immediate practical importance. I therefore submit for your consideration one aspect of this question. In little more than a year, there will be a general election. This should be a serious consultation of the people of Great Britain about the affairs of the nation. There will be submitted to the people at least three programmes of policies or of political principles. Naturally we do not know how the electors will vote in respect of these programmes, but my indictment against the present electoral system—and it is a serious one—is that the nation does not know whether the resulting representation will correspond in any reasonable degree with the votes, expressed at the polls. Who is in a position to tell me whether the result will be reasonably right? It may be right by accident, but the views of the people are far more likely to be grossly distorted, when expressed in terms of representation. One party with a minority of votes may get an overwhelming majority of the seats. We do not know. Is this gamble the best of which a great nation is capable, a nation well endowed with universities and schools?—Yours, &c.,

JOHN H. HUMPHREYS.

THE WAR GUILT QUESTION

SIR,—Arising out of Mr. Meyrick Booth's letter, may I submit a few questions?

1. Is the ascertainment of the moral responsibility for the war a question of historical fact, only ascertainable by those who bring a judicial mind to the study of all the available evidence?

2. Is it conceivable that such persons could be influenced in the smallest degree by the declaration as to war guilt in the Treaty of Versailles?

3. Can any sane person suppose that a public inquiry would be anything but a source of exasperation?

Mr. Booth suggests that reparations rest on this declaration of guilt. If so, it is the first time that an indemnity was determined by moral considerations. Does anyone suppose that the indemnity exacted from France in 1870 was based on a moral judgment as to responsibility? So far as

this country is concerned is not Germany paying us in order that we may pay the United States?

After all, what does this guilt question amount to? If, in fact, a preponderant share of responsibility does attach to the Germans, is it not fairly clear that the devils of the piece were the German military authorities, and that, had the Chancellor's will prevailed, there would have been no war? If that is true are not we all fellow sufferers with the German people who were the victims of their military masters? In this matter the Germans may be in a similar position to that of a merchant who is liable to pay for the misdeeds of an agent although no moral responsibility attaches to him.—Yours, &c.,

CHAS. WRIGHT.

SIR,—Is not the desire to be fair after the event mainly psychological? Will it ever be possible to weigh this question by the examination of official documents and the present attitude of mind of serious men in Germany, without putting the state of public ambition and opinion also into the scales?

More than twenty years after the victorious wars of Germany against Austria and France, Bebel could still state that the people were "Siegesdrunk." In the decade before the Great War, the German nation was, quite naturally, elated by the growing prosperity and power of the Empire, of which expansion came to be considered an inevitable need. This was not officially proclaimed, nor was it a secret conspiracy, it was implied in the attitude of mind of the nation, and the world understood. So evident was it, that even visitors returned from Germany impressed by the trouble ahead to satisfy this apparently inevitable need for expansion.

Exaggerations are usual on both sides on all questions, but it cannot be said that the German nation was blamed without evidence, when the pre-war sentiments are remembered. The "Mailed Fist" may, and probably is, now as little applicable to Germany as a nation as "John Bull" is to England. Is not this the great moral issue?—Yours, &c.,

AN OUTSIDER.

THE LIBERAL ATTITUDE

SIR,—Is Mr. Francis Birrell's little fight with "Kappa" a private one, or may others join in? (These are rather dull days.) Personally, I agree with both sides. Like "Kappa," I have a "Liberal" outlook on other things than politics. As he wants something drastic to be done about greyhound racing and films of Christ, I want it done about inhospitable inns, dismal railway stations, extortionate hotels, unconnecting railway trains, tipping, and stunt newspapers. With Mr. Birrell, however, I have a horror of the Liberal Party becoming a universal busybody, and censor of public tastes and morals. It has wrecked itself too often before, and handed the country over to reaction because of overloading.

The fallacy would seem to be in seeing for every ill a legislative remedy. The things that "Kappa" dislikes, and those which I and other people dislike, are remediable not by Act of Parliament but by education in vocational ethics. If producers of commodities and organizers of services to the public were taught to see that it pays best in the long run to produce and to do good things rather than bad, our causes of complaint would vanish.

But who is teaching vocational ethics? At present, only the professions are regulated by code, or standard of practice. Let us professionalize all those trades that minister to the mass of the public—amusements, entertainments, hospitality, transportation, and popular information—and have the code of ethics regulating the conduct of each and all engaged therein publicly advertised. Then there will be some public hold on those who cater for our bodies and our minds that is at present lacking.

The Code, by the way, is not to be furthered by legislation, but by organized agitation within the ranks of the various vocations. This would, of course, be non-political: but is "liberalism" necessarily political? Would it not assure to itself a more glorious future if for a while it looked away from the narrow grooves of party, and cultivated a forgetfulness of "Self" and a consciousness of "Service"?—Yours, &c.,

VIVIAN CARTER.

34, Norfolk Street, Strand, W.C.
November 27th, 1927.

COMMUNITIES

By L. B. NAMIER.

AT the passages of Jordan the men of Gilead slew forty-two thousand Ephraimites for reasons much better than the modern derisive use of the word "shibboleth" would seem to suggest. "Art thou an Ephraimite?" was the basic question; they tried to ascertain each man's "community," the invisible bonds which are as real as man's own existence, and indeed dominate it.

Every test becomes a shibboleth when the reality of that which it was to have tested, or the organic connexion between them, is felt no more. By an enormous effort some reflection in words is found for relations of human life; but symbols, when repeated, tend to become decorative, and as words gain currency, their rich, living contents gradually fade away. The schematic conceptions which remain, clothed with a seemingly independent existence, draw men into misinterpreting themselves and misunderstanding each other. History, when viewed in terms of pure ideas, becomes a record of human folly. But men are seldom so absurd as words make them appear; seldom, if ever, do they fight and die, or even kill, for a mere shibboleth.

To some the subject matter of medicine is disease, and of history ideas, as if these were extraneous things which visit or befall human beings. But disease is merely a condition of the human body defined and circumscribed by medical thought, and some diseases vanish whilst others appear, only because of changes in medical conceptions and terminology. Nor have nationality and religions an independent existence and permanent, immutable contents; they reflect certain things in the lives of communities, and often the same things under changed names. When dominant and contested, they denote the existence of different communities which acknowledge no bond higher than their own internal bond, and fight over the eternal, insoluble problem, how mass organisms can co-exist within the same or contiguous territory? Community, however, is a living reality, which merely centres and finds its symbol in some acknowledged principle or combination of principles—consanguinity, real or presumed; the profession of a creed; the use of a language; the manner of securing one's livelihood. But in the consciousness of men, communal existence and inter-communal conflicts assume a tribal, religious, national or class character; until at last it appears as if the particular distinguishing principle had created those communities and given origin to their conflicts. In reality a mass organism is like an Indian god; it has a hundred arms and can be called by a dozen names, and every principle which arises from it and by which it happens to be distinguished, stands for much more than its visible contents. It expresses the nature of the community and is all-pervading.

"Division in religion," declared Sir John Eliot in the House of Commons on June 23rd, 1625, "dissolves all ties and obligations, civil and natural, the observation of heaven being more powerful than either policy or blood." But when scanning the heavens, the Latin races found them essentially Roman; and the upper classes among the Anglo-Saxons deduced from such observation a form of religion more authoritarian, traditional, and hierarchic than did the people, inclining in Presbyterian Scotland and Congregationalist New England towards Episcopalianism, and in Episcopalian England towards Catholicism. Like the mariners of those days, by a close and intense "observation of heaven," men discovered their exact position on the earth; for nine-tenths of religion bear on relations between men and not on creed. Individual souls seek God,

but communities and classes express in religion their own nature and aims, and adorn or burden it with their own peculiar signs and symbols; and it is not God who makes creeds differ. When religion ceases to be the principle of division between communities, men soon discover that in every god there is something divine, and that the gods of various creeds are very nearly interchangeable.

"For my part, sir," declared Dr. Johnson, "I think all Christians, whether Papists or Protestants, agree in the essential articles, and that their differences are trivial, and rather political, than religious." But just because the differences are political, so long as the community seeks its supreme self-expression in religion, conformity is demanded from its members; and Johnson himself defended the regional principle in religion even where the differences were not trivial to him.

JOHNSON: The vulgar are the children of the State, and must be taught like children. BOSWELL: Then, sir, a poor Turk must be a Mahomedan, just as a poor Englishman must be a Christian? JOHNSON: Why, yes, sir; and what then? This now is such stuff as I used to talk to my mother when I first began to think myself a clever fellow; and she ought to have whipt me for it."

In England uniformity never received more than an external, political character; there was no prying into beliefs, overt acts alone were required and considered. When, under James I., Parliament demanded the enforcement of anti-Papist legislation, they emphasized that their intention was not to interfere with the souls of men—these must be left to the Lord—but merely to control the movements of the bodies. By communion with the Established Church, Englishmen were expected to signify their adherence and submission to the national community; they were to show their "common sense."

"Our religion," wrote William Cobbett, the Radical, two centuries later, about his family, "was that of the Church of England, to which I have ever remained attached; the more so, perhaps, as it bears the name of my country. . . ." The inherited, communal character of his religion was not a matter of offence to this thoroughly human, big-hearted man; he felt in it none of the reproach, with which the zealot, Samuel Fothergill, described in 1754 the very sound and sensible condition of the Pennsylvania Quakers who had "a profession of religion, which was partly national, which descended like the patrimony, and cost as little."

Simple men subconsciously recognize and know the complex social character of religion. A friend of mine lives in a part of Eastern Europe where the landowners and peasants are Catholics, and the traders and artisans Jews, whilst the few rich Jews who enter the squirearchy become Catholics. On her estate there was, however, a poor Jew who worked as a farm labourer, and through a similar process of social assimilation finished as a convert. "Still, he was always such a Catholic," was the comment of another peasant for whom the mere fact of peasant labour qualified the Jew as a member of the Christian community. Not so for the cook at the manor house who, having been some thirty years in the family, felt akin to the ruling classes, and who had never seen Jewish "converts" except among the squirearchy: "I told the priest he should not baptize him, and I was sure your ladyship would share my view; baptism is not for such a simple, vulgar Jew." She thought, like some of the royalist aristocrats of the Faubourg St. Honoré on the conversion of a well-known Jewish journalist, that baptism should be reserved for Jews of higher social standing.

Religion, when it embodies the dominant social principle, does and must denote community; and it was one of the most ominous signs in Russia that the name of Chris-

tians (*krestyanye*) should have been limited by the peasants to themselves alone; the others were thus implicitly put beyond the bounds of community—the first step towards class-war. The stronger the bonds of community, the more indistinguishable are the various signs or symptoms of communal existence; hence the absurdity of discussing whether the Jews are a race, a nation, or a religious congregation—they are a community. Hence also among the most truly clannish of nations, the Scots, the national Church holds a peculiar position; a Scotsman, even if a perfect agnostic, retains a fine feeling of reverence for the Presbyterian Church and its organization, because, at least subconsciously, he understands its national, communal character. For the same reason the Scots never showed much feeling or sympathy for their own co-religionaries among other nations, e.g., for the English or American Presbyterians during the American Revolution. And when I once told a Scottish minister about a member of a Latin race who had become a Presbyterian and was preaching Presbyterianism to his countrymen—"Good Lord!" was his only comment; the thing seemed to him, to say the least, highly unbecoming. But this did not prevent him from warmly contesting my thesis about the predominantly sociological, communal character of religion.

"Never has it happened that two or more nations should have the same god," says the fervent Christian, Dostoevsky. "Each nation has its own God. It marks the decline of nations when they start sharing their gods. Then the gods die, and the faith dies together with the nations. The stronger the nation, the more exclusive is its God." A community must be distinctive in its most fervent and passionate tenets, or it ceases to be a community.

And when "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither . . . learn war any more," still they "will walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever."

SOFT WORDS AND PARSNIPS

THERE is a certain natural disobedience in all of us which makes us push when we are told to pull. Who, after all, with the least sense of pride is going to take his orders from a door? I am not sufficiently a psychologist to explain why when I am told to keep to the right I invariably turn to the left, or why I go in when I am told to come out. It may be that in earliest infancy I was dropped into a coal-box by a careless footman. Stranger complexities of character, I am told, have arisen from such trifling accidents.

But these rebellious feelings aroused by the officious instructions which hedge in our daily life are much too common to have any individual origin. It is enough explanation for me that the spoken words of ordinary intercourse which are used in command, direction or request are not, in point of fact, couched in such curt terms. Therefore when told, nay ordered, to "have all tickets ready," it is a just thing in human nature to hold all one's tickets in a state of unreadiness. If I belonged to the spitting community I should continue that vile habit unmoved by a direction so crudely expressed as "Do Not Spit."

Let us have greater politeness, greater prolixity in our public notices, tempered when necessary by a brief appeal to common sense. Let us realize that a liberty-loving people cannot be marshalled or directed by rude words.

There was a wave of anti-snobbery some years ago, which began to turn the "Ladies" and "Gentlemen" of our public lavatories into "Men" and "Women"—but

it did not answer. The men and women did not like it. They liked to think of themselves as of good birth, even when paying their twopences for a wash and brush up. The number of twopences collected by the municipalities diminished, and they mended their manners. The purchasers of hot and cold water and a clean towel in a wrapper (unbroken) became ladies and gentlemen again. Quite rightly too. In Spain, by the way—the politest country in Europe—no one under the status of a *caballero* is assumed to need these humble conveniences.

But a Germanic abruptness spread to this country some years ago, and the courtesy of our public notices declined. The "Please" was left out of "Keep Off the Grass." I have even seen such abbreviations as "Smoking Forbidden," and that is as German as can be, though, in practice, the Germans use the language of a rude nurse to a naughty child, saying *Nicht zu Rauchen* or *Nicht zu Spucken*. There is a kind of implied slap at the end of such commands which may suit Germans but does not suit us.

Is not the common phrase of the well-conducted English home "If you ask politely —"? Is that not followed nine times out of ten by a swallowing of pride and the faltering utterance of "Please"? It would be well if our public authorities remembered these lessons of childhood. It is only necessary for them to be decently civil, to ask politely and on occasions to explain why they ask and they will be obeyed by the mass of the people. But we will not be dragooned.

One of the most polite public notices I have seen in this country is in the county town of High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire. It runs: "The public are requested to refrain from sitting on the fire-escape." This is an excellent notice, for it freely acknowledges the temptation which must occur to many of us to sit on the fire-escape. Should this become irresistible we are not forbidden but merely asked very courteously to refrain from doing so. No one but a churl or an illiterate could fail to be moved by it. Small boys playing at fire-engines would find their depraved little hearts touched by so simple an appeal.

In the Prado in Madrid, hanging in the Velasquez room, where surely the tersest insistence on good behaviour might be forgiven to the curators, there hangs a notice, the Spanish of which I have lost, but which, very roughly translated, is as follows: "It is hoped that the courtesy of the public will be so great that they will neither smoke, spit, nor fondle the pictures." Confident hope, fulfilled day after day, year after year—and yet how much more effective an appeal to sensitive souls than the "Do Not Touch" of our own picture galleries.

Having established that peremptoriness is usually met by disobedience, it remains to show how prolixity is often more effective than brevity. A man who pays no attention to the fact that "Trespassers Will Be Prosecuted," but passes gaily on his way, will stand and read attentively of man-traps and fierce dogs and treacherous swamps, and then stride to the road. It would pay our authorities to spend a little more on their printing bills. I do not want to exaggerate, but I should respond immediately if I read on entering an empty non-smoking carriage some such notice as this:—

"It would be good of you not to smoke even if you are alone. A little lower down the line this carriage may be occupied by an old lady to whom the smell of tobacco is disagreeable; an American evangelist in whom it arouses the most violent passions, or a victim of asthma to whom it is positively painful.

"You will try, won't you?—for my sake if for no

one else's? It is such a bothering business running a railway, you never would think.

"Yours,

"BROWN BROWNLEY BROWN,
"Managing Director."

My better instincts would be aroused. I should return my pipe to my pocket. Idle threats of a fine of forty shillings and costs simply call up the sportsman in me. I back my pipe against the threat, and so far have always won.

I have left to the last the greatest public notice I have ever known. It appeared, I think, only for a brief period in the bar of a University theatre. It was not only a very fine piece of English prose, but a remarkable exercise in ingenuity. The matter which called it into being was a tiresome habit of undergraduates of over-applauding instead of quietly sniggering, as well-behaved audiences should do, at the innuendos or *doubles entendres* of musical comedy actors. The manager of the theatre could not, of course, admit the existence of any double meaning, but he could scarcely be expected to suppress the high spirits of his comedians. It was the high spirits of his audience that concerned him more. So he caused to be printed the following proclamation:—

"There is no objection to reasonable applause or the encore of a popular song or dance—but any attempt to draw attention to a word or phrase in which a *perverted intelligence may imagine that it has detected impropriety* will be met by the immediate expulsion of the offending person or persons."

To remember so long-forgotten a phrase is not perhaps such a feat as Lord Macaulay boasted that he could perform. But then every copy of "Paradise Lost" never did disappear, as I fancy did this framed exhortation to good manners, under suspicious circumstances, not long after it was first exhibited.

J. B. S. B.

SISLEY AT THE INDEPENDENT GALLERY

IT is a piece of singular bad luck that Sisley, of all painters, should be offered to our view in the Cimmerian darkness of this season. For hardly any other artist loses so much when the exact relations of his delicate colour contrasts and transitions are missed. Although he stands out from the group of the strict Impressionists to which he belonged by reason of something more deliberate in his composition, even the composition of his designs is not fully intelligible without the subtle accents of colour in which it is expressed.

I think it must be admitted that none of the men of this group, none of those who abandoned themselves to the exploration of the newly apprehended aspects of nature which we sum up under the heading of atmospheric colour, attained to the first rank as artists. The narrow intensity of conviction which the excitement of discovery aroused in them prevented them altogether from dominating their subject. They were always a little too much fascinated by the actual appearances to mould them completely to the expression of an idea. Beside the four great artists who used these discoveries of vision in a freer, more casual manner, beside Cézanne, Renoir, Degas, and Seurat, the strict Impressionists always strike us as minor artists; they do not create for us so rich, so definite, so consistent a world-outlook. They give us delightful notations, exquisite but partial interpretations of appearances, they do not transmute them entirely into expressions of values.

But if compared to the exacting standard which those great men set, they fall short of the highest attainment. What they give us remains, as far as it goes, intensely en-

joyable; and among those men it is Sisley who, I think, compounds for us the most subtly exquisite flavour.

Sisley is the type of the artist of pure sensibility. Before certain aspects of nature his sensibility responded with a quicker, more exactly proportioned vibration than any other. And he accepted this receptivity to the minuter shades with an implicit and touching obedience. If his attitude implies certain limitations in the range of expression open to him, he has also supremely the virtues of such an attitude of submissive receptivity. He refuses absolutely to take sides in the game. If for one instant he allowed himself to be partial to this or that element of attraction he would imperil the delicate balance of his response. The slightest emphasis on what, in a given scene, might make it more impressive or more effective would be of the nature of an injustice, a betrayal of the perfect sincerity of his attitude.

There is a sort of chivalry in this resolute self-effacement which endears him to us. We must guess for ourselves at the depth of feeling which is thus hidden beneath the even tones of his quiet, deliberate statements. And yet for all that, these subtly precise notations of appearance, these impeccably just evaluations of the tone of sky, of the exact relief of a tree or a house against it, or of the relation to both of their images reflected in water, are never mere statements of observed fact; the emotional response, if felt at all, is felt all the more from its never being obtruded. Both in the lyrical quality of his mood—serene but without a trace of melancholy—a mood which seems to grow out of a pensive intensity of contemplation, he is of the parentage of the early Corot, though he has never quite the gift of finding for its expression such surprising and incisive motives as he did. He is indeed never surprising. It seems perfectly natural that he should choose as he does. It is only gradually that we discover how perfectly appropriate every touch is, how learned—in the best sense of the word—these apparently obvious compositions are.

If we did not know that Sisley was an Englishman I doubt if anyone would ever have guessed it. But when we do know it, we are tempted to find an explanation of his specific quality in his inheritance. Certainly one may think that acute response to all the moods of landscape, to the various appeals of grey winter skies over snow-covered gardens, of shifting lights of driving cloud reflected in a broad bend of river—that sensitiveness to the exact temper of the weather at any moment of the day at every season of the year—one may think of that as belonging specially to us, as shown quite as much or even more in our poetry than in our landscape ever since we lost the opportunity which Constable's genius offered.

If indeed we call this imaginative response to landscape an English trait, Sisley had one great advantage over all our landscapists since Constable, namely, that he learned, by his French upbringing, the truth, which it seems so difficult to acquire in England, that the painter, and, above all, the landscape painter, should let poetry take care of itself.

ROGER FRY.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

POOR Mr. Noel Coward is in trouble again and none are now so poor to do reverence to the young Marcellus. He was thoroughly badly treated over "Home Chat," but it must be admitted that in "Sirocco" (at Daly's Theatre) he has rather brought the trouble on himself. For one thing, he has endeavoured to "treat the passions," a task for which he lacks the requisite sensibility, and the "strong stuff" must be written down a failure. Perhaps people do talk as Mr. Coward makes

them, when their nerves are thoroughly frayed. But though no one asks Mr. Coward to sentimentalize the facts, he must formalize them a little. You cannot write a "passion scene" entirely out of gasps and grunts and heaving hearts. The play begins very amusingly with some excellent dialogue between the English inmates of an Italian pension, in which Miss Ada King shone as usual; and the local Church of England clergyman was delightfully etched. Then there were a few uncomfortable moments between husband and wife. Still a bearable Act I. Act II. consisted almost entirely of an Italian dance, with interludes of lovemaking between the heroine and an Italian (so very, very "dago"). This might have been tolerable if better produced. But Mr. Basil Dean failed badly to come up to scratch, and so Act II. was a failure. In Act III. Miss Doble stopped playing in character, which so far she had done with some measure of success, and became merely a Coward young woman in a temper. This Act would have been well-nigh insufferable anyhow, but Mr. Dean made it worse by raising the tempo to an intolerable height and keeping it there. The result was laughter combined with a slight feeling of nausea. On the second night the play ended with an exhibition of "British fair play" on the part of the audience. But I doubt this chivalry's meaning a long run for "Sirocco."

I have the greatest possible respect for Playroom Six, who have provided many hours of consolation to critics. But I fear that the "Manderson Girls" is not among their happiest efforts. It is written by an intelligent person, but is unsuccessful, partly because it is impossible to deduce what attitude the authoress is taking up towards the universe she is constructing (Mr. Coward occasionally, and in a lesser degree, suffers from the same failing). By the end of Act II., it is difficult to say whether the main character is a man of the most delightfully high-minded and virtuous disposition or merely an intolerable prig. The same sort of theme was treated in "Widowers' Houses," but Mr. Shaw, being a real dramatist, made the whole situation clear as soon as he wanted to. Perhaps inexperienced dramatists would be well advised not to try and be too subtle, and to lay on their colours with a broader brush. I suspect Tchekhov of being a dangerous master. He makes people frightened of saying what they want. The old Elizabethan method of making the characters come on in turn and explain themselves to the audience has a good deal to say for it. It saves time and leaves the stage clear for the matter in hand. Melodrama is better than anæmia, which is the disease of the "Manderson Girls." But no doubt Miss Bertha Graham, who has obviously a sensitive mind, will do better next time, and on this occasion she was not very much assisted by the producer and the cast.

The Gate Theatre Studio has now reopened at 16a, Villiers Street, Strand. The new theatre is a vast improvement on the old, in that it is larger—about two-thirds the size of the Everyman—the auditorium is raked, and the stage is apparently well-equipped, especially as regards lighting. What little decoration has been attempted is not, perhaps, very satisfying to the eye, but one cannot have everything; and the fact that Mr. Peter Godfrey has now a theatre more worthy of his powers and more fitted for their exploitation should make us content. "Maya," by Simon Gantillon, "paraphrased" into English by Virginia and Frank Vernon, is his opening play. It may be described as a dramatic essay on man, expressed in terms of prostitution. Like most symbolic plays, its symbolism is difficult to follow, and in this case the more so as the performance leaves a great deal to be desired. There is at once too much and too little attempt at verisimilitude. The prostitutes are played by actresses who are so ladylike and refined that it is quite impossible to forget the individual parts they are playing and to focus one's attention on the ideas which the author intended to be conveyed by their collective presence. This might not matter so much if they were acted capably, but with the exception of Miss

Ffrangcon-Davies and Miss Veronica Turleigh, they are woefully inadequate. The men are better, but only Mr. Godfrey and three others are in tune with the play.

Mr. Shaw informed us in a note on the programme of "The Glimpse of Reality," his one-act play produced at the Arts Theatre last week, that it was written in an idle moment. This was not difficult to believe, though the play is, as one would expect, streets ahead of much that one sees in the modern theatre. So let us not be ungrateful, and leave it at that. "Creditors," which followed, displays all Strindberg's intensity and fanatic misogyny, but little of his skill as a dramatist. When it was first given in London by the Stage Society some fifteen years ago—in a far better translation, incidentally, than the one now used—it served well enough as an early preparation for the present Strindberg vogue. But compared with the other plays of his with which we have of late been so fortunate as to be plied, it is a vastly inferior wine, heady indeed, and of little worth to the gourmets we have now become. A superlatively good performance was given by Mr. Maurice Browne, a good one by Miss Ellen von Volkenburg, and a superlatively bad one by the third member of the cast.

For their Christmas performance this year the Cambridge University A.D.C. have chosen "The Chief Thing," by Evreinoff; the reasons for doing so are obscure, since it is a poor play incoherently written, full of clichés and banality, and based on the well-worn text "All the world's a stage." Only one scene relieves the drab cycle of trite remarks, that in which we see the rehearsal of "Quo Vadis" by a third-rate company; this is really funny, and was excellently set and produced by Frank Birch. Mr. D. Beves as Petronius in sock suspenders was brilliantly comic, as also was Mr. F. H. Jennings as Poppea. The rest of the play was only moderately acted, and not well produced; each character faced the audience and bellowed, with the result that one soon became too stunned to follow the words; surely the producer of "Berkeley Square" knows better than to use this outworn technique in such a small theatre. Mr. C. J. Carruthers gave an excellent performance, both as a producer and as a schoolmistress, and Mr. H. D. Noone, as a dancer, was cleverly feminine.

An exhibition for those who are interested in portrait-photography is that of Mr. Cecil Beaton, at Cooling's Gallery, New Bond Street. Many of Mr. Beaton's portraits have real beauty of composition, and if some are merely *chic*, others are full of character. Mr. Beaton does not, like many fashionable photographers of the day, envelop his sitters in a mist and obliterate all modelling from their faces.

Things to see and hear in the coming week:—

Saturday, December 3rd.—

Orchestral Concert for Children, Central Hall, 11.
The Erhart Chamber Orchestra, Victoria and Albert Museum, 3.
"Nathaniel Bendersnap," by G. D. Gribble, Arts Theatre Club.

Sunday, December 4th.—

Mr. S. Seeborn Rowntree on "Some Social Implications of the Christian Ethic," Friends' House, 6.30.
Mr. H. W. Nevinson on "England as Explained to Foreigners," South Place, 11.

Monday, December 5th.—

Mr. H. D. Henderson on "Employment and National Development," National Liberal Club, 8.15 (London Liberal Candidates' Association).
Mr. Bernard Shaw's "Getting Married," at the Little.
"The Seagull," by Anton Chekhov, at the Maddermarket Theatre, Norwich.
"Life, Palpitating Life," at the "Q."
British National Opera Co., Golders Green Hippodrome (second week).
London Symphony Orchestra, Queen's Hall, 8.

Tuesday, December 6th.—

Mr. Leonard Woolf on "The Inverse of Imperialism," Friends' House, 8.

Debate between Mrs. Abbott (Open Door Council) and Dr. Marion Phillips on "Protective Legislation for Women," 29, Grosvenor Place, 8.

Baron Meyendorff on "Women under the Soviet Government," King's College, Campden Hill, 8.45. Kathleen Cooper, Recital, Æolian Hall, 8.15.

"The Wrecker," by Mr. Arthur Ridley, at the New Theatre.

Wednesday, December 7th.—

Dr. Robin Flower on "Ireland and Mediæval Europe," Burlington House, 5.

Dr. L. R. Lempriere on "The Health of the Public School Boy," Royal Institute of Public Health, 4.

"Dr. Syn," by Mr. Russell Thorndike, at the Strand.

Thursday, December 8th.—

Royal Philharmonic Society's Concert, Queen's Hall, 8. Ingo Simon, Recital, Wigmore Hall, 8.45.

Friday, December 9th.—

Concert by the Tudor Singers, Steuart Wilson, and the Robinson String Quartet, Æolian Hall, 8.15.

OMICRON.

THEATRES.—continued from opposite column.

SHAFTESBURY. Gerr. 6666. Evgs., 8.30. Mats., Wed. & Sat., 2.30.

"THE HIGH ROAD."

A New Comedy by FREDERICK LONSDALE.

ST. MARTIN'S. Gerr. 3416. Evgs., 8.30 sharp. Mats., Tues. & Fri., 2.30.

"THE SILVER CORD." By SIDNEY HOWARD.

LILIAN BRAITHWAITE.

CLAIRE EAMES.

WYNDHAM'S THEATRE. (Regent 3028.)

EVENINGS, at 8.30. MATINEES, WED. & SAT., at 2.30.

"THE WAY OF THE WORLD."

EDITH EVANS.

GODFREY TEARLE.

CINEMAS.

CAPITOL, Haymarket, S.W. Continuous DAILY, 1 to 11. SUNS., 6 to 11. Commencing Sunday Next, December 4th.

"THE RED MILL."

Featuring MARION DAVIES

Also JOAN CRAWFORD in "WINNERS OF THE WILDERNESS."

STOLL PICTURE THEATRE, Kingsway. (Holborn 3703.)

DAILY, 2 to 10.45. (SUNDAYS, 6 to 10.30.)

Dec. 5th, 6th & 7th. RONALD COLMAN in

"THE WINNING OF BARBARA WORTH."

THOMAS MEIGHAN in "BLIND ALLEYS."

Dec. 8th, 9th & 10th. CHARLIE MURRAY in "McFADDEN'S FLATS."

CONRAD NAGEL and CLAIRE WINDSOR in "TIN HATS."

ART EXHIBITIONS.

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THE NOVEL OF TO-DAY

THE critics of to-day seem to be greatly concerned about the novel. Some of them, like Mr. Forster in his recent book, are quite cheerfully analytic. Others come with the grave and professional faces of doctors gathered about the bedside of a patient whom they contemplate, not without a little satisfaction, as suffering from an astonishing complication of disorders. Look, for instance, at Mr. Joseph Gordon Macleod who has written his diagnosis in "Beauty and the Beast" (Chatto & Windus, 7s. 6d.). This is an "essay on literature," but, except for a little poetry and drama, contemporary literature is synonymous with fiction for Mr. Macleod. His diagnosis is brilliantly clever. Like so many of the best medical men, Dr. Macleod talks to the friends of the patient at great length, with the utmost frankness and kindness, but in such technical language that we leave the Olympian Harley Street convinced that we have taken the most up-to-date advice of the most brilliant specialist of our time, but not at all sure that we have understood a single word that he has said to us. Even the prescription is written in the curious abracadabra which impresses and puzzles the layman. Why, for instance, we ask with all humility, should Mr. Macleod always write "the man's comprehension" with an apostrophe, and "Samuel Butlers comprehension" without? And as the neat and discreet parlourmaid softly closes the door behind us and dazed we walk to catch our bus in the Marylebone Road, we repeat to ourselves the last sentence in which the great man summed it all up for us: "Thus Beautys beauty, whose beauty is Alpha, whose Omega is the beast," and ask ourselves whether we are quite sure we know what form means and significant form and comœdic and anthropomorph. Frankly I do not know, but I think that I know that Mr. Macleod means that the contemporary novel is in a very bad way, having got entangled in something called Reality and with Proust and Mr. Joyce singing the swan-song of a dead or dying age.

Mr. Priestley has written an interesting little book, "The English Novel," in Benn's Sixpenny Library. Mr. Priestley is almost a bone-setter compared to a Harley Street specialist. He never talks about anthropomorphs, and one feels, while one is in the consulting room, that one is being talked to in plain language of which one understands every word. Even the bone-setter is not quite happy about the present condition of his patient. Contemporary novelists, he tells us, are disillusioned and exasperated; they write clever novels with brilliant remarks in them, but they do not create characters of importance or "construct a significant action." "The major novelist succeeds because, for the purpose of his art at least, he is taken in at every turn by life, by the hopes and fears, the joy and sorrow of all manner of fellow-creatures. It is this wide sympathy, this brave generosity of the imagination, that lies at the root of all great fiction, and at the moment is not much in evidence."

I suspect this diagnosis to be the exact opposite of Mr. Macleod's, though it is comforting to find that they agree in thinking the patient to be in a very bad way. Mr. John Carruthers in "Scheherazade or the Future of the

English Novel" (Kegan Paul, 2s. 6d.), is one of those cheerful doctors whose bedside manner is so reassuring that, while they are in the room, even double pneumonia sounds comforting; half an hour later, we remember with a catch at the heart that of what they actually said the most optimistic remark was: "Well, my dear sir, we must all die some day." Mr. Carruthers begins rightly by objecting to an absurd statement of a reviewer in the NEW STATESMAN, who spoke of the "desert of post-war literature." No one could imagine anything less like a desert than English fiction to-day. There has never been a time in which the general level of production has been higher. No doubt hundreds of worthless novels are published every year; but the number of young writers of talent who write excellent novels is extraordinary. Mr. Carruthers can make a list of twenty post-war English novelists, whose work can be taken seriously. It is an impressive list, and no other branch of literature could show anything to compare with it. Yet even Mr. Carruthers, when he looks closer at it, is a little disconcerted. None of these writers has written a masterpiece, none of them has produced a novel "good enough to take its place in the canon along with 'The Egoist,' 'The Return of the Native,' 'Lord Jim,' 'Maurice Guest,' 'Tonobungay,' 'The Old Wives' Tale,' and the first three parts of 'The Forsyte Saga.'" Mr. Carruthers's diagnosis differs again from Mr. Macleod's and Mr. Priestley's. The patient, he says, is suffering from a kind of *anæmia philosophica vitalis*; inject a little philosophy of life and all will be well; "what we need and must have, if any of our work is to live for more than a publishing season, is a new philosophical synthesis, a new imaginative attitude towards the world."

* * *

The mind of a friend of a patient, pronounced to be in *articulo mortis*, who has just consulted three or four different specialists, is apt to be slightly confused. The three doctors have prescribed respectively a dose of Form, a dose of "wide sympathy," and a dose of "philosophy of life." I suspect that the disease, if disease it is, which prevents the production of novels which are masterpieces, goes much deeper than any of these remedies would imply. The critics talk of the relation of the novel to "life" and to "form," but I do not see that they have any clear idea of this relationship and at any rate they do not leave me with any clear idea of their idea. In reading the best modern novels, as a rule, they give me the impression that the author knew what he wanted to do and often did it in parts of the book, or even in all its parts, but not in the book as a whole. I do not believe that masterpieces are written without some central idea which holds the writer's mind and the book, and keeps both at a certain temperature, from the first page to the last. But it is not form, or wide sympathy, or philosophy of life, that does this. It may be something, as sometimes seems to be hinted, akin to belief, something which in an age of disillusionment dies out of writers' minds as it dies out of the minds of politicians and theologians. At any rate, in the minds of our best novelists there seems to be this bare spot, a kind of mental vacuum which lowers the level of their temperature and of the temperature of their books.

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REVIEWS

GEORGE III. AND HIS MINISTERS

Correspondence of King George III. from 1760 to December, 1783. Edited by the HON. SIR JOHN FORTESCUE, LL.D., D.Litt. In six volumes. Vol. I.—1760-1767. Vol. II.—1768-June, 1773. (Macmillan. 25s. each vol.)

"THE Official Papers of George III." would perhaps be the most fitting description for this collection, wherein the long letters partake of the nature of memoranda, whilst many of the short ones might now be telephone messages. Practically none is of an intimate character, for George III. had only one close personal friend among his Ministers, Lord Bute, and it is in the letters to him alone that the King's private character is fully disclosed. Sir John Fortescue supposes them "to have perished in the fire which destroyed many of Lord Bute's treasures at Luton"; he obviously follows therein Mr. R. B. Knowles who, in 1872, when examining the Bute MSS. for the Historical MSS. Commission, failed to find any letters from George III. among them—for at that time they were in the possession of Lord Harrowby, as can be seen from Lord Fitzmaurice's "Life of Lord Shelburne" (published in 1875), and from the "Register of the Correspondence of the Earl of Bute, 1739-1762," purchased by the British Museum at the sale of the Harrowby MSS. in 1903. The papers of the third Earl of Bute are now once more in the possession of his descendants in the male line, and I am much indebted to the present Marquess of Bute for having very generously given me access to them.

Still, even without them, this collection, published from the Royal Archives at Windsor Castle, is of the very greatest importance for those crucial years in British history, and every student of that period, whatever his special subject, will find in it new and valuable material. The outlines of the public character of George III., marked by former publications of his letters, are confirmed and filled out by this new and much richer collection. The Whig legend about him has for some time past been discarded by serious historians. George III. was a believer in authority and in law and order, and hated what was called the "mobility"; he was a strict disciplinarian, and seldom has there been a party Whip more determined to punish Parliamentary "deserters." Still, he did not think in terms of "prerogative," but of Parliamentary divisions and majorities; as, however, in accordance with the ideas of the time, he considered himself the head of the executive, there naturally could not be for him such a thing as "His Majesty's opposition." He was, on the whole, loyal in his dealings with Ministers, and had a very fair idea of Cabinet government; and though his treatment of the Rockingham Government in 1766 was not altogether candid, there are two sides to the story, which will have to be carefully revised in the light of new evidence supplied by Sir John Fortescue's book and several as yet unpublished collections of manuscripts.

As the publication of material and not of a finished account is the work of Sir John Fortescue, he rightly prints all documents which may possibly serve as historical evidence, even notes fixing appointments, or various drafts of the same document. But his editorial work is not what one would have expected from so distinguished a historian. Regular explanatory notes begin with document No. 885 on page 207 of Volume II. Obviously Sir John Fortescue sees the need for them—but then why start so late? (There are, e.g., fifteen letters from or to Sir Joseph Yorke, before it is explained, in a note on No. 1146, that he was Minister at The Hague.) The proper editing of such a mass of papers would undoubtedly be an arduous task; but it seems preferable that the editor should undertake it than that hundreds of students should be forced to do it over and over again, each for himself only; whilst for the ordinary reader, a good part of Sir John Fortescue's publication, as it stands, will prove incomprehensible.

But even when an editor reduces his part to that of a printer, he can hardly avoid the task of placing undated letters, of identifying the writers and recipients of those which bear no signature or address, and of correctly reproducing the names of people mentioned in the correspondence. In all this Sir John Fortescue's work is deficient. Important documents are seriously misplaced (Nos. 143, 190, 199, 588, 593, 675, 784, 891)—not to mention minor dislocations or doubtful

cases. To take the first among them as an example: were the date of the King's memorandum, marked No. 143, August 1765, as suggested by Sir John Fortescue, George III. would have asked Pitt to form a new Government at the very time when he professed to accept that of Rockingham; but it is obvious that the memorandum was drawn up a year later, between the 25th and 30th of July, 1766, and No. 348 is the King's note summoning Pitt to the interview mentioned in the first sentence of No. 143. As for identifications: No. 11, marked "Lord Powis to [Lord Bute?]," is to Lord Carnarvon, and No. 14, "Lord George Sackville to Sir Harry [?]," is to Sir Harry Erskine. The writer of the very important "Memorandum on the American Colonies" (No. 454) is not named; Lord Barrington seems its author, but a reader has not the same means as the editor to test such suppositions. Worst of all is Sir John Fortescue's handling of names. The many lists of Parliamentary speakers and of Parliamentary divisions in the book are most valuable, but in these and other documents at least fifty names appear in an utterly distorted form or with wrong initials. Whoever is acquainted with the people will guess that "Orby Hanson" (Vol. I., p. 93) is Orby Hunter, "Thom. Monro [?]" (I., p. 94) is Humphrey Morice, "Aishby" (I., p. 276) is Aislabie, "McCane" (II., p. 78) Maclean, "Vassal" (II., p. 205) Nassau, "Juvin" (II., p. 450) Irwin, &c., &c.; and anyone will recognize in Sir Thomas Phillips (I., pp. 54-55) the old Jacobite, Sir John Phillips, in T. Shelley (I., p. 205) "Jack" Shelley, in J. Walpole (I., p. 465) Thomas Walpole, &c., &c. Had Sir John Fortescue consulted Beatson's Registers and Haydn's "Book of Dignities," he would have escaped difficulties and mistakes.

As for the index, its blunders defy all description. Sir John Fortescue pleads indulgence "for the unfortunate individual" who had to distinguish between different men bearing the same name or identify different spellings of the same name; but clearly it was for the editor to instruct him in this matter. And anyhow, without expecting "infallible accuracy," one finds it difficult to excuse his describing George Montagu Dunk, 2nd Earl of Halifax, as "Savile —," his calling George, 4th Viscount Townshend, "Charles," his making Henry Fiennes-Clinton, 9th Earl of Lincoln, into "Thomas Pelham-Holles, Earl of Lincoln and Marquis of Clare" (which he never was), and finally sending him down to the House of Commons in place of Robert Nugent, Viscount Clare, M.P., &c., &c.

It is with much reluctance that I make these criticisms of the work of a historian rightly admired in his own province, but as four more volumes are to appear of this most important and valuable collection of documents, I do so as a plea for the future.

L. B. NAMIER.

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fighths a short but decisive action: two conditions which are satisfied by the books under review. The modern biographer faces his victim with the bright, unwinking stare of the terribly intelligent child. He utters a crisp and comprehensive "Why?" Under this stare and this inquiry, pedestals collapse and ancient batteries of eulogy and denunciation melt away. Nothing shocks him, nothing violently excites him; he is unbiased, he only wants to know how this human being worked. Thus, when he penetrates a desirable residence, you will not find him gaping at the brass plate or wasting much time in admiring the treasures of the best parlour. He will be all over the house, upstairs in the bedrooms, downstairs in the scullery and the usual offices. His idea, it seems, is to explain what goes on in the best parlour by means of what is going on in other parts of the house. When he has satisfied himself he sits down to paper and answers his own questions, without fuss or comment, in a simple narrative. If the parlour events are really only explicable in terms of the unmentionable, he mentions it. Some people, watching the tongue of this writer, aver it to be in his cheek. His story, they say, is not as simple as it looks. It is not even a single story, and if it is read with close attention, it is seen to be full of unseemly jokes.

Mr. Dobrée has an enormous amount of ground to cover in explaining the residence of the Duchess of Marlborough. Its backstairs alone form an infinite series, its state-rooms open out disconcertingly upon European battlefields. Anne is in the parlour, Abigail Hill and Harley are on the stairs, Whigs and Tories bicker in the ante-rooms, Englishmen and Frenchmen and Dutchmen are all over the house, and Marlborough himself, to determine the colour of whose heart so much ink has been spilt, is perpetually in Sarah's private chamber, however far away his person may be. The strain of keeping an eye on all this is evident in Mr. Dobrée's writing, which falters, as well it may, in the ugly mazes of Revolution politics. But his study of Sarah's relations with Anne is both just and psychologically illuminating, and by refusing to probe too deeply the enigma of Marlborough he manages to compass his subject and to bring out most forcibly the contrast between her furious stability and the unstable human scene which she dominated. It is true, as he suggests in a fine passage, that when we look at a historical figure,

"we do not see one, we see two or three or four persons who, against all likelihood, bear the same name, and are gathered together in one coffin under one belettered tombstone."

Yet Mr. Dobrée's Sarah is a recognizably tragic figure, driven by her ferocious vitality to rule, to amass, and to die "leaving behind none who loved her, but a very great deal of valuable property in land."

The trouble with Elizabeth Chudleigh, and with Miss Curtis Brown's amusing account of her, is that she was all backstairs and no best parlour. She, like Sarah Churchill, was a beauty, a wit, a maid-of-honour, an incorrigible snatcher of courtly bon-bons. Her peers solemnly assembled in Westminster Hall to decide whether she was the Countess of Bristol or the Duchess of Kingston; she gave the most lovely parties; and Horace Walpole's friends always mentioned in their letters the latest exciting news of Miss Chudleigh. But she was little more than a nimble, calculating child at the heavy Hanoverian garden-party. Miss Curtis Brown gives us Elizabeth, and many another figure winding in and out of the busy fripperies of Vauxhall and Bath. We are never dull in a world where good jokes are as common as bogus maids-of-honour and bad debts. Miss Brown, with her command of tiny, telling detail, makes the most of all this; but the most does not amount to much.

Aphra Behn, beautiful, hearty, and gross, devotee of Poetry and Pleasure, who held her own in an astonished Grub Street and fought her way on to the Restoration stage, is a very different kettle of fish. Her biographer bursts into a best parlour filled with a most formidable pile of works, and very little else. Why on earth was she named Aphra, and who was Behn? She went to Dutch Guiana—but when? Her amours were the talk of the town—but who were her lovers? Her plays, her novels, her poems were once the rage—then why was she always hard up? This almost ludicrous obscurity only puts Miss Sackville-West on her mettle. Piecing her slender material together with a cool,

quiet skill, she is able to argue and to persuade that a woman who has been reviled for her loose living and her gross pen was, none the less, brave, generous, idealistic, and honest. And she writes a chapter of literary criticism sensitive enough to send many people to her works to decide for themselves what they may have missed because Astrea, instead of trusting to her coarse, gay English, and her knowledge of unfashionable London, insisted on going modishly to Italy and Spain for her literary style.

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MR. GRAVES has devoted far too large a proportion (about two-thirds) of his book to an abridged version of the story of the Arab campaign, already sufficiently and brilliantly told by Lawrence in his "Revolt in the Desert"—itself in some people's view a not altogether satisfactory abridgment of "The Seven Pillars of Wisdom." There is, however, much of interest in what remains—notably an intriguing and fascinating character-sketch of his hero in Chapter 2—and the latter part of the volume reproduces apparently in full a recent letter from Lawrence which is frankly sensational, though it may be doubted whether Mr. Graves realizes the fact. As a historian he falls far short of the ideal—even his prose stumbles badly on occasion—and, whatever he may have learned of Lawrence during the seven years of their acquaintance, he has omitted to study the elements of Arabian history and politics. He is consequently ill-equipped to be Lawrence's biographer, and incapable of writing critically of his opinions and prejudices. These he appears to accept unquestionably as right, and it is thus that he fails to realize that Lawrence's letter in Chapter 29 involves an unqualified recantation of the whole of his original position which brought him so much fame and notoriety. The hospitality of the Royal Air Force has completely undermined



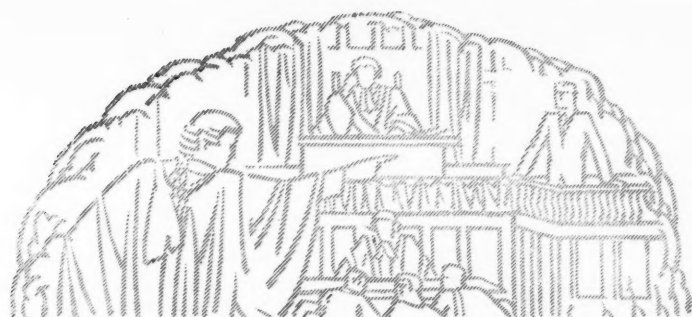
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the nihilism latent in the Lawrence of Arabia, who now finds it more amusing to expend his surplus energies on motor-bicycle "scorching."

Disillusionment was already at work on Lawrence before the culminating triumph of Damascus brought the war to an end so far as he was concerned. And a year later we find him gloomily convinced that "the part he had played in the Arab revolt [i.e., of duping our Arab allies] was dishonourable to himself and to his country and Government." One imagined that he was of the same mind to this day, but his letter makes it clear that in his opinion "Winston Churchill's settlement [of the Arabian problem] has honourably fulfilled our war-obligations and my hopes"—and that happened as far back as in 1921. He no longer contemplates leading the Arabs in arms against the British, and he implicitly admits that the attitude adopted by him in the early post-war period—his refusal of British decorations, his rudeness to British Cabinet Ministers, and the rest of it—was ill-advised. The simple fact is that the "Churchill settlement" perpetuated the Allied arrangements of Versailles and San Remo, and riveted them more firmly on the neck of Arabia. Lawrence's acceptance of it but confirms an impression of his lack of political acumen. And those would seem to be justified by the result who questioned from the beginning Lawrence's capacity for anything like consistency of judgment.

Now and again Mr. Graves pours scorn on Mr. Lowell Thomas, but himself gravely tells us that Lawrence might have been Emperor of Arabia had he liked. Mr. Thomas has never committed himself to anything quite as absurd as that. And frequently he seems unconcerned to guard his hero against a charge of inconsistency. On page 390, for instance, having taken "Lloyd George into his confidence" (!) "he wanted Damascus as the settled home of this new Arab independence . . ." but on page 396 "I told Lloyd George at Paris that the centre of Arab Independence will eventually be Bagdad, not Damascus. . . ." In either case his judgment was very seriously at fault, for it is Mecca, under a different regime, that has since established itself as the natural capital of independent Arabia, though Mr. Graves writes: "Mecca . . . because of its sanctity and its distance from Syria and Mesopotamia, is impossible as the capital of an enlightened State. Also the Desert (for Mecca was the Desert) could never rule the settled lands." After all, it is Great Britain and France who rule the "settled lands" at the present moment with Faisal and Abdullah as puppets in the game. But Lawrence is completely satisfied, and the British Government is to be congratulated on having secured so powerful an advocate of its policy of adding certain desirable sections of the Arab world to the British Empire. "I was at one with him [Winston Churchill]," says Lawrence, "in this attitude: indeed I fancy I went beyond him in my desire to see as many 'brown' dominions in the British Empire as there are 'white.'" One wonders what the Arabs will think of him now after such a confession, and one cannot but agree with Mr. Graves that such a Lawrence is difficult to reconcile with the original Lawrence. It is more difficult, however, to understand how he can still include him as one of the only three men of his acquaintance who really think. One wonders who the other two are. And one can only conclude in justice to Lawrence that the letter published in this volume is a "leg-pull"; but, if it is not—if Lawrence really takes himself seriously—one would like to assure him that the "risks he took with others' lives and happiness in 1917-18" were not really "immoral and unwarrantable." Everybody else was doing the same sort of thing at that time. What is "immoral and unwarrantable" is to let down the Arabs in their effort towards independence as he has now done by his strange letter.

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The Comte de Ségur's life of Marie Antoinette is a very different matter. M. de Ségur was a conscientious and widely read historian. But this is the last book he wrote, and shows some of the signs of old age. He, curiously enough, seems unduly prejudiced against the Ancien Régime, and modern research will hardly approve his summary dismissal of such Ministers as Breteuil and Calonne. Ségur is still somewhat under the influence of the Necker myth. In a general way it is difficult to say much that is new on the subject. The five volumes of the Mercy-Argentaup correspondence cast on the unfortunate queen a blazing searchlight, which would be too much for almost anybody, and M. de Nolhac and Mr. Belloc have both summed up the mass of documents adequately. M. de Ségur relies for novelty on the Barnave-Fersen-Marie Antoinette correspondence which was translated into English last year, as to the authenticity of which, he observes, there can be no doubt whatever. But unfortunately there can be every doubt, especially as regards the Barnave letters, which are the only ones of real importance. It is impossible to go into this subject at length again, but we can only say that the letters clash with all former conceptions of the personal characters of Barnave and the Queen, and with Barnave's undoubtedly authentic "Correspondence inédite en 1792." Those anxious to pursue the subject further can refer to Miss Badley's life of Barnave, her subsequent article in the English Historical Review, the notes by M. Michon in his *Adrien Duport*, and the criticisms of Herr Glagau in the *Annales Révolutionnaires* for 1914. The weight of criticism seems overwhelming and does much to destroy the particular value of Ségur's book. Otherwise he writes with considerable charm and perception, and tells once more the story that never grows tedious of a woman whose expiation bore no possible relation to her offence, and who was perhaps ultimately sacrificed to the political schemes of her Austrian relatives. This book is very nicely got up, but a little more care might well have been spent on the spelling of the proper names. No distinction seems made between "n" and "u," and English readers should not be confused by references to Bonilly, Bretenil, Vaudrenil, and Sonlavie. Rather too many Gallicisms also remain in the translation, which, however, reads smoothly enough on the whole.

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include, for example, Sir Alfred Mond's celebrated speech in the House of Commons in March, 1923, on the occasion of a full-dress debate on Socialism; as also his political apologia, "Why I joined the Conservatives." The reason, in brief, appears to be that it is the Conservative Party which "adheres to the fundamental principle of individualism." To some, this will read as an amusing comment on the underlying philosophy of some younger exponents of Conservatism—to mention but one example, the authors of "Industry and the State." The "Socialism" of the "Green Book" may differ in its objectives, but it certainly does not differ in its methods, from a "Socialism" to which such writers as these would readily subscribe.

There remains a series of half a dozen papers which deal with some of the major problems of industrial organization: unemployment; co-partnership; arbitration, and the prevention of disputes. All of these are readable; the most interesting is that in which is set forth, once again, the scheme for relieving unemployment with which the author's name is especially associated. Its underlying idea, it will be remembered, is the provision, from the Fund established under the Unemployment Insurance Acts, of a graduated subsidy in aid of wages. The scheme, when first put forward, was subjected to devastating criticism which has not, in the present writer's opinion, been effectively answered. The proposals, it was urged, implied a return to the misguided notions of the "Speenhamland" era, and would have comparable economic consequences. Sir Alfred Mond, whose pugnacity in controversy is well-known, has now attempted to answer this criticism by examining the "Speenhamland legend" itself. His provocative conclusions are well worth study. "Without the system," he says, "the labourer's lot would have been unbearable, and at the lowest estimate of its value it was instrumental in preserving the labourers from starvation and rebellion. It was a real attempt to provide profitable employment, and in many cases where the Labour Rate was adopted, it was an eminently successful and well-thought-out scheme." The views of historians as to the merits of this appraisal will differ; but at least it helps to show that Sir Alfred Mond has the courage of his convictions.

A word ought to be added in appreciation of the considerable services that the author of this book has rendered, in writing and on the platform, and (more important still) by the practice he himself has stimulated, to the cause of industrial peace. His introductory chapter, and some of the addresses which the book contains, are contributions of value in furtherance of that cause.

SALT OF THE SEA

The Great Days of Sail. By ANDREW SHEWAN. Edited by REX CLEMENTS. (Heath Cranton. 10s. 6d.)

THIS book stands out from the ruck of "windjammer" literature by reason of Captain Shewan's exceptional authority to speak on the subject. Grandson of a Peterhead whaler, and son of a well-known clipper captain, he was himself Master of the "Norman Court," a crack ship, during the great days of the tea-races. He has seen fifteen clippers together, waiting at Pagoda Anchorage for the early teas. When he compares the performances of "Cutty Sark," "Sir Lancelot," "Fiery Cross," "Ariel" (whom he holds to have been the fastest of them all), and other ships famous in history, he is speaking of vessels he has known—against many of whom he has actually raced. His memory goes back to days when the last of the Peterhead and Aberdeen whaling fleets put to sea with "garlands" hung aloft for luck; when the "Geordie" brigs still carried London's coal supply; when a happy boy could go down to Blackwall pier to see Green's and Dunbar's stately frigates set sail for the still mysterious East.

His narrative is just what it should be: modest, unaffected, rich in reminiscences of great ships and great seamen, full of allusions to old customs and traditions of the sea. His chapter on the origin of shanties has real historical value, and will surprise many readers by putting "Rio Grande" and "Californio" where they belong, as well as by quoting the really poetic first stanza of the "Drunken

Sailor," and the north country wine trade addition, "Ting-a-ling-a-ling for the Virgin Mary." But the most valuable feature of the book is that it brings out, better than almost anything else that has been written on the subject, the real factors in passage-making—the extraordinary sensitiveness and liveliness of the China clippers, and the rare combination of daring, judgment, and incessant vigilance that was required for a racing captain. Captain Shewan has not much use for the padlocked topsail sheets and other traditions of the "carry-on-till-all's-blue" school. Whatever may have been the case in the big Yankee Down-Easters, the command of a China clipper, in the light, baffling airs of the island-studded Eastern seas, was a fine and delicate art, demanding at least as much brain as nerve.

The book has some good illustrations, including one or two ships one seldom sees; but it is no mere letterpress written round the plates. Books on the great days of sail are multiplying so rapidly that one cannot keep them all; but this is one of the volumes that will never be sifted out.

PAINTING AND ITS HISTORY

A Simple Guide to Pictures and Painting. By MARGARET BULLEY. (Chatto & Windus. 7s. 6d.)

MISS BULLEY was a competent writer to entrust with the contribution of a volume on Pictures and Painting to Messrs. Chatto & Windus's "Simple Guides" series. Many people, authorities on art or critics of it, might have quailed at such a task, which, as Miss Bulley has planned it, comprises not only a general introduction to the theory of art and to the art of looking at pictures, but a general outline of painting in Europe from Cimabue to Picasso. She does not set up to be an original critic or theorist, but fills her difficult rôle of popular exponent with remarkable success. She writes clearly and interestingly, explains and criticizes with intelligence and lucidity, and does not trouble the head of her reader with a greater number of names and dates than are necessary for following her as she traces the thread of great painting through different schools and in different countries. She never loses sight of the important effect on painting of the mundane forces of the moment—the Church, scholarship, forms of government, national predilections, science—to which many writers on art have paid too little attention, regarding art as something essentially detached and unrelated to the events of the day. Miss Bulley's emphasis on this point makes the development of her theme both more interesting and much easier to follow. From the soundness of its ideas, the clearness of its general grasp, it is a book which all young students of art should read, and if the study of art is taught in schools—as we believe it to be in some schools nowadays—we can imagine no better text-book.

The book is divided into two parts, "General" and "Particular," the latter comprising the historical, the former the theoretical aspect of painting. In her theory of art, stressing as it does the absolute importance of design, and in the manner in which she tells the spectator how to look at a picture, she is indebted to Mr. Roger Fry: she conveys very clearly, in simple and non-technical language, the way in which a picture is constructed, pointing, so to speak, at her excellently chosen illustrations. For the different and the wrong ways of looking at pictures, she imagines nine visitors to an art gallery; one of these looks at the pictures solely from the point of view of subject-interest, others from the point of view of the historian, the connoisseur, the craftsman, the psychologist, the dealer, the society hanger-on, the politician. She discusses the significance of design, the relation of a work of art to life (dealing under this head with the "spirit of the age," stimulus, subject-matter and opportunity, evolution, locality and nationality), and with the personality of the artist. She also has an interesting chapter on material, craft, and tradition, in which she explains the techniques of fresco, tempera, oil, and water-colour painting, and their gradual changes and development. Miss Bulley's writing is founded on a scholarly knowledge of her subject: moreover she has a discriminating enthusiasm, and it is this that makes her book not only informative but readable.

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The book has been "sold out" for over a week, and fresh supplies will not be available till Dec. 6th; but, instead of issuing the usual "Apology" (with which publishers advertise their joy at such phenomena), I prefer to congratulate all those who already have this amusing (and most instructive) little book. Frankly, I had no idea that so much interest was taken in the intricacies of the French language.

Of course "BRIGHTER FRENCH" will make an ideal Christmas present; so too will Karel Capek's "LETTERS FROM ENGLAND" in its new 3s. 6d. edition.

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DECEMBER, 1927.

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The Prospects of Literature. By LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH. (Hogarth Press. 1s. 6d.)

Castles in Spain. By JOHN GALSWORTHY. (Heinemann. 3s. 6d.)

WHY should we not rejoice in the age we live in? With all its faults, from the price of bananas to its culture-while-you-wait systems, it has its beauties too; it prints so well, and even an inveterate lover of the Bulmers and Moxons can grow affectionate towards the three little books just enumerated. We have heard it alleged that futurity will only receive from us as works of art earthenware jam-jars and paste-pots—a sallow-hued slander; unless there is a general conflagration, such pretty relics as these volumes will reward the inquiring eye a long time hence. The mode of printing is of particular importance in regard to the Poet Laureate's publication, in which his devoted spirit of improvement in taste and reason is applied to typography. The subject of his pamphlet (which inaugurates a series) is "The Influence of the Audience on Shakespeare's Drama," an essay revived from the Stratford Edition of Shakespeare in which it was printed twenty years ago. With his own peculiar blend of primness and caprice, he has in this paper indicated the way in which Shakespeare suited not merely his "bad jokes and obscenities," but even the whole lie of his dramatic land to the contemporary playgoer, and he warns us not to "degrade ourselves to the level of his audience." Presumably that audience was not too low to take delight in the wonderful lyrical emancipations occurring so often among the rest; are we so ready nowadays for the voice of angels to come suddenly out of our less spotted drama? But the question is aside, for Dr. Bridges prefaces the book with the statement that his experiments with new phonetic symbols interest him more than his Bowdlerian reflections of 1907. He has evolved, in order to differentiate vowels and consonants, some playful characters, and he spells "imagin," "hav" and "forgiv" in the curtailed way shown.

While the Laureate is playing his shears in the unweeded garden of orthography, Mr. Pearsall Smith gazes into the large pool of modern literature. He sees a respectable shoal of roach and dace there, one or two pike (a little emaciated) in the creek, but after all nothing for the glass case and golden legend. His principal reason or instinct for sweetly denying Mrs. Woolf's view that "we are trembling on the verge of one of the great ages of English literature" concerns the vocabulary dominating current writing. He contrasts the indistinction of it with the daring abundance and gusto of literary men's language in the acknowledged great ages. In this we think he has a strong argument against the present period. One opens almost any work of the eighteenth century, for instance, on no more promising subject than the Day of Judgment or the timber trade, to meet with sayings and sentences quite different from expectation, and striking home to the senses. The decline of proverb and metaphor, the growth of the abstract manner of viewing humanity have combined to monotonize our expression, and deliberate attempts to relieve this are always found out in a little while. But the "linguistic phenomena" do not supply all that Mr. Pearsall Smith regrets. The easy and early success, which the fashionable support of books now yields to many, and which condemns its winners to an exhausting improvisation, weighs upon his meditation. In fine, he regards the time as one of talent but not genius, and his desire is that the talent should be cultivated in perseverance, and even in poverty; this he illuminates in a handsome peroration.

The essays and addresses now assembled by Mr. Galsworthy form a reckoning of the spirit of the age, in which he gives a generous amount of space to modern letters, and like Mr. Pearsall Smith comments on the question of our expression. What strikes him about it is not its uniformity so much as its struggles to escape—"so much froth on the lips of contemporary style." The very epithets he chooses to gild the refined gold of our lingual inheritance—"the supple strength and subtle tones of our rich and ancient language"—reveal the limpness of so much modern wording;

all of these terms are met with almost every day, with no health in them. This is not to allege that Mr. Galsworthy's papers are tame; he has most agreeable passages and vivacious humours, and his philosophy effuses quite a glowing light; but even he gives an immediate point to Mr. Pearsall Smith's discrimination.

EDMUND BLUNDEN.

LABOUR MEMORIES

Up and Down Stream. By HARRY GOSLING, C.H., J.P., M.P. (Methuen. 7s. 6d.)

Early Socialist Days. By W. STEPHEN SANDERS. (Hogarth Press. 3s. 6d.)

To many people the name of Mr. Harry Gosling stands for red ruin and the breaking up of laws. But even the retired colonels and elderly ladies of Cheltenham and Tunbridge Wells will have to modify their idea of him, should they happen to read this volume of his reminiscences. Mr. Gosling here reveals not only a very pleasant personality, but in some respects a conservative one. "I must be a sentimentalist at heart," he says, as he reviews the passing of the "quaint old customs and places" associated with his youth. He is the great-grandson of a Thames waterman, and the Thames runs through all the recollections of his boyhood. Born in Lambeth in 1861, he was taken in a boat, on the occasion of the great Tooley Street fire, when three weeks old; and, after a perfunctory education at a Board School, of which he gives us so vivid a glimpse, he was duly apprenticed to the river at the age of fourteen. The Thames, retaining some of its wooden bridges, was still the Thames of Dickens's novels—murky and insanitary, and the scene of constant pilfering and pirating. But among its watermen there was "an adventurous and care-free spirit," a "dogged and happy-go-lucky kind of temperament," that Mr. Gosling, although it has been his task to promote organization and discipline, looks back upon with unconcealed regrets.

Mr. Gosling might have remained a waterman all his life, had it not been for a breakdown in health in 1891. This illness, however, which forced him to abandon his calling as lighterman, brought him into even closer touch with the river as the elected representative of the river men. The Dock Strike of 1889 had served to shake them out of that political lethargy which, as Mr. Sanders bears further witness, had characterized them more than any other class of workers; and Mr. Gosling became the General Secretary of the first trade union of watermen, as distinct from the small and mainly philanthropic societies that had hitherto been their only bond of association. Mr. Gosling's later activities are a matter of common knowledge. He writes of them modestly and interestingly, and his pleasant anecdotes about Lord Devonport are but one example of his fair judgment of opponents. Intimate, and sometimes amusing, sidelights are thrown upon many recent events, including the imprisonment of the Poplar Council in 1921 and the Triple Alliance negotiations that ended in the fiasco of "Black Friday" in the same year.

Mr. Sanders, who was sometime Secretary of the Fabian Society, joined the Socialist Democratic Federation in 1881, at the age of seventeen; and, in his delightfully written fragment of autobiography, he recalls his own memories of the Socialist Movement up to 1892, when Keir Hardie and Mr. John Burns were the first two Labour candidates to enter Parliament. Graphic pictures are given us of meetings, in the eighties, in an upper room at Sydney Hall, Battersea, where, among other speakers, Hyndman, Graham Wallas, Bernard Shaw, and a handsome young man called Ramsay MacDonald used to address a quaintly assorted little group of people on Sundays. From Sydney Hall, "his elementary and secondary school," Mr. Sanders passed to the Fabian Society, his "university." Excellent portraits are furnished of many of its leaders; and a noteworthy feature of Mr. Sanders's book is his brief, but very lucid, account of the manner in which British Socialism escaped from the tyranny and embarrassment of its Marxian origin and evolved a life of its own.

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THE D.N.B.

The Dictionary of National Biography, 1912-1921. Edited by H. W. C. DAVIS and J. R. H. WEAVER. (Oxford University Press, and Milford. 21s.)

A VOLUME bringing the Dictionary of National Biography up to date is always an event. Inevitable growth has resulted in some complication in the present anatomy of this famous dictionary. Founded by the publisher, George Smith, it was originally "completed" in 1900. Supplements brought it down to the year 1911. The present volume is a further supplement including those who have died during the years 1912-1921, and an index to all the supplementary volumes.

The work has been well done in most cases. The highest standard in the work is shown by the fact that the late Mr. Hogarth writes on Lord Cromer, Sir Frederick Maurice on Kitchener, Mr. Percy Lubbock on Henry James, and Professor Basil Williams on Botha. The nearer the dictionary gets to our own times, the more difficult is the task of the editors. The greatest of all difficulties are the twin problems of whom to include and exclude and what proportion of space to allot to the different persons included. The editor of the previous supplements was certainly much too liberal in his policy of inclusion, and the present editors point out that if they had followed the same scale, the work would have been swollen to impossible dimensions. As it is, the exaggerated importance attached to the achievements of contemporaries is noticeable particularly in the large amount of space devoted to second-class persons as compared with that devoted to first-class persons in the main work. A politician like Sir Michael Hicks-Beach was probably of about the same importance as Sir John Pakington of the previous generation, but Hicks-Beach gets seven columns in the new volume to Pakington's four in the old. An artist of no distinction, like Sir Edward Poynter, gets rather more space than such an important artist as Bonington. The immortality of Andrew Lang is deemed worthy of more than twice the number of columns allotted to the author of "Lavengro" and "Romany Rye." However, such eccentricities are almost inevitable in the case of those who have so recently become immortal, and there can be no question but that an immense number of people will find this volume extremely useful.

ON THE EDITOR'S TABLE

MESSRS. EYRE & SPOTTISWOODE publish a handsome edition of "The Dialogue Concerning Tyndale," by Sir Thomas More (30s.). It is a facsimile reproduction in black letter from the 1557 edition of More's Works. It also contains a modern version and essay by W. E. Campbell and a historical introduction and notes by Dr. A. W. Reed.

Yet another new series! This time it is "The Vanguard Series," each one of which has as its title "The A.B.C. of —." They are handy, cheap, well-produced little books, published by Messrs. John Hamilton at 2s. 6d. The first volumes deal with Geology, by Allison Hardy; Biology, by Vance Randolph; Evolution by Vance Randolph; Astronomy, by Jay L. B. Taylor; Physics, by Jay L. B. Taylor; Physiology, by Vance Randolph; Chemistry, by Newell R. Tripp.

The letters of Clara Schumann and Brahms, published early this year in Germany, are now published in English under the title "Letters of Clara Schumann and Johannes Brahms, 1853-1896," edited by Dr. B. Litzmann (Two vols., Arnold, 36s.).

"Manners Makyth Man," edited by R. Brimley Johnson (Philpot, 15s.), is an anthology from great writers to illustrate manners and customs in England from the time of Chaucer to the nineteenth century.

The Scholartis Press publish "Blake's Poetical Sketches," with an essay by Jack Lindsay on the metric of Blake (9s.).

BOOKS IN BRIEF

The Oxfordshire Hussars in the Great War. By ADRIAN KEITH-FALCONER. (Murray. 18s.)

This Regiment was the first Territorial unit to leave for the Western Front, but arrived a day or two later than the London Scottish and the H.A.C. Mr. Keith-Falconer has many lively impressions and stories of the first autumn, and the autobiographical touch distinguishes his book. The following conversation will do him justice better than encomiums:—

"9TH LANCER: 'What regiment is that?'
"VILLIERS: 'The Oxfordshire Yeomanry.'
"9TH LANCER (in a tone of the deepest disgust): 'Good God! Who's on your left?'
"VILLIERS: 'The 4th Dragoon Guards.'
"9TH LANCER: 'Thank God!'"

Experience speaks throughout, from the 1914 adventure to the 1918 release. Such volumes contain twenty times more excellent writing than the flamboyancies of opportunist pens.

A History of the British Army. Vol. XII.—1839-1852. By J. W. FORTESCUE. With Maps. (Macmillan. 40s.)

This stately work proceeds in the twelfth volume through a number of small wars and negotiations in India, Afghanistan, China, Australasia, Burma, and South Africa. Mr. Fortescue laments his inability to consult the archives at Lahore, but amusingly describes the mass of bewildering documents bequeathed by the East India Company to the India Office, whence with fierce determination he has resolved "something new for the Afghan war." The most famous episode in these 600 pages is the sinking of the "Birkenhead."

Outside the Law; Diversions Partly Serious. By SIR FREDERICK POLLOCK. (Cayme Press. 7s. 6d.)

The diversions, if literary, of learned men are nearly always pleasant, and Sir Frederick Pollock has been wise to publish his in this volume, so pleasantly produced by the Cayme Press. His first paper is serious enough, for it deals with "the relation of mystic experience to philosophy." But before we reach the essay on Shakespeare and War, we have enjoyed much lighter recreation which owes a good deal to Sir Frederick's love of cats, for cats make their appearance in Rabelaisian French, in a French chanson, and an English poem—all of which testifies to Sir Frederick's versatility and ingenuity.

A History of the English Agricultural Labourer, 1870-1920. By F. E. GREEN. (King. 7s. 6d.)

This reprint of Green's attractive work is welcome. It has the virtues, as well as the limitations, of a first-hand study, a volume of reminiscences. Green loved the agricultural labourer, and though love may be blind, it is not as blind as indifference and contempt. He wrote, for the most part, of what he had himself seen, or had heard from those who had seen it. The result is a gallery of vivid and illuminating sketches, but the book should be read as a journal, rather than as a history.

Tancred. Lothair. By BENJAMIN DISRAELI. (Peter Davies. 10s. 6d. each.)

These are the tenth and eleventh volumes in the Bradenham Edition of the Novels and Tales of Benjamin Disraeli. There is now only one volume, "Endymion" and the posthumous fragments, remaining to be published.

REVIEWS AND MAGAZINES

THE "Round Table" publishes an article in the form of letters on "Germany and Geneva." "On the arbitration side," says the anonymous writer, "the group plan favoured by the Norwegians seems the best line of advance, and it may fit in best with Chamberlain's regional suggestion. . . . It is amusing, isn't it, the way we each of us pick our fancy for the race? 'Security' carries the French money, 'disarmament' the German, and here is an 'arbitration' colt likely to be carrying ours before very long, all, of course, strictly under 'National' Hunt rules. It may or may not take the world much further, but it is, at all events, a step." "Augur," writing in the "Fortnightly Review," discusses the difficulties which Herr Stresemann finds in his own country with regard to the creation of friendly relations with Poland. "In Poland they (the Junkers in East Prussia) see

COMPANY MEETING.

SECOND CO-OPERATIVE
INVESTMENT TRUST

REMARKABLE GROWTH

The Fourth Annual Ordinary General Meeting of the Second Co-operative Investment Trust, Limited, was held at Kingsway Hall, London, on the evening of November 25th, some seven hundred members and friends being present.

The Chairman, Alderman A. Emil Davies, L.C.C., in the course of his speech, said:—

Ladies and gentlemen,—You have all had a copy of the report and accounts for the eight months ended September 30th, 1927. This odd period has been chosen so as to make the Trust's accounts cover a different period from the First Co-operative Investment Trust, Limited, thus relieving the pressure on the office staff. In future you will receive half-yearly reports in respect of the six-monthly periods ending March 31st and September 30th of each year.

You will notice that the figures we now have to deal with show a remarkable increase. During the eight months our capital has grown from £56,286 18s. to £293,658 2s. Our net income during that period has been sufficient to maintain our dividend at the rate of 7 per cent. per annum, without deduction of income tax, and to increase the balance carried forward to the next half-year from £722 10s. 9d. to £1,082 5s. 4d. While our share capital has grown during the eight months by £237,371 odd, our investments, figuring in the balance sheet at £379,005 15s. 6d. show an increase during the same period of £303,624, the difference being borrowed from our various banking connections. It is perfectly good finance to borrow at 5 and 5½ per cent., in order to invest in securities paying 7 per cent. or more.

APPRECIATION OF INVESTMENTS.

As I pointed out at the meeting of the First Co-operative Investment Trust, Limited, in March last, on the basis we adopt of valuing our investments at middle market price, and not reckoning in the Government stamp duty and brokers' charges on them, every purchase must show an immediate loss directly it is made. During the eight months we have bought over £300,000 new investments, and I calculate that the depreciation represented by the difference in the middle price and the actual cost, plus stamp duties and brokerage on so large an amount of new purchases, would be at least £10,000. Instead of having to show any such depreciation, however, we have been able, by utilizing the £1,920 16s. 4d. which stood to the credit of the investment reserve, plus £2,379 5s. 7d. of profits on the few investments sold during the eight months, to make the statement that the aggregate value of our investments at September 30th was in excess of the amount at which they stood in the balance-sheet. Put in non-technical language, at September 30th last our net assets were worth more than 2s. per share, without counting the reserves and carry-forward of £4,722.

The growth of your Trust is remarkable. The capital shown in the report is under £300,000. It sounds almost suspicious, but you must take my word for it, that the subscriptions that came in this very day enable me to tell you that at the present moment our capital exceeds £400,000. (Cheers.) As you know, we form part of a group of three investment trusts. The investments of those three trusts are in the neighbourhood of 2½ millions sterling. I think those figures, as a result of four years, are remarkable and certainly indicate that we fill a need.

THE CITY'S ATTITUDE TO THE TRUSTS

It is gratifying to be able to tell you of the good will that has been shown to us in the City and elsewhere. There has been no hostility. Important people in the City have recognized that, in mobilizing the savings of the masses, we are performing a social service. We are, to a great extent, preventing those savings from going to some of those eminent people to whom I have referred, and we are securing capital for Governments, municipalities, and industries, and, I hope and believe, helping small people by encouraging thrift and giving them a higher yield on their money, with safety, than they could otherwise get. That good will has not been confined to the City, although I am pleased to say that one or two of our broker friends from the City are on this platform, even though I have not dared to look at their faces while referring to brokers' charges. (Laughter.) We have also encountered the same thing—not merely for business reasons—on the Continent, in America, and in the Dominions.

I am pleased to say we have our Toronto broker, Mr. Burgess, on the platform, and I am going to ask him to tell you what things are like in Canada at present.

After the Chairman had replied to a few questions and complimentary speeches, the report was unanimously adopted.

Mr. C. H. Burgess then addressed the meeting, the Chairman stating that that gentleman's recommendations had been extremely valuable and profitable to the Trust.

Copies of the speeches in full, with the Trust's report and accounts and list of investments held, may be obtained on application to Second Co-operative Investment Trust, Broad Street House, London, E.C., if mention is made of this paper.



"C'est Magnifique !

—your accent is perfect, Jack"

These young people are right up to date. They are going over to the Continent this winter and they mean to get the very utmost out of their holiday. They realise from past experience that the ability to speak and understand French is essential to their complete comfort and enjoyment. They appreciate also that an understanding of French would help them in dozens of other ways—it will be useful to Jack at the Office—they could help the kiddies with their lessons—and Young Jack would find it a valuable asset now that he's starting his business career. So they are acquiring this ability, but not by any of the usual dry, difficult and uninteresting methods. They are turning their self-education into a pleasant pastime. They are making a hobby of what hitherto was a task. They are turning the long, dark evenings to good account and enjoying it!

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the hereditary enemy who has retaken the land lost, and now threatens them in the home market of foodstuffs. We do not joke when we say that it is the resistance of the Prussian Junkers to the importation of the cheap Polish pig which inspires their old allies, the Geheimrats, to defeat the efforts of Herr Stresemann to come to an understanding with Poland." Professor Caldwell, in the same paper, writes on "The Case for Poland To-day." Professor Caldwell's warm sympathy for the Polish nation betrays him into somewhat sweeping statements on matters which are extremely complicated; for instance, writing of Danzig and the "Corridor," he says: "It is becoming more and more apparent that the natural affiliation of Danzig is with Poland and not with Germany. Economically, the future of Danzig is undoubtedly with Poland. And when Germans, either inside or outside of Danzig, contend otherwise, it is not by economic but by national and anti-Polish reasons that they are influenced." This is something less than fair, as also is "Augur's" reference to the Lithuanian Government's "absurd" "State of War" against Poland. What of "General" Zeligowsky and Vilna? Arthur Ponsonby writes in the "Contemporary Review" on "Disarmament by Example." G. N. Barnes argues in favour of the Protocol in the "Review of Reviews." Professor Seton-Watson has an interesting article also in the "Contemporary" on "The Little Entente," and Georg Schaulman writes on "Baltic Politics." There is an account of present-day Russia in the "Round Table," with an examination of the state of the various classes, "bourgeois," workmen, and peasants.

The Autumn number of "Commerce," the French Quarterly, appears this month. Paul Valéry contributes a note on Bossuet, there is a poem by Léon-Paul Fargue, and an essay by Valéry Larbaud. Jean Paulhan translates a hitherto unpublished lecture by Nietzsche, giving the German text; there is also a translation by Valéry Larbaud of a short story by Liam O'Flaherty.

The Christmas number of "Chambers's Journal" provides a generous number of short stories of the adventurous kind. The "Cornhill Magazine" has an article by Lady Charnwood on Stowe House and those extraordinary people the Days and the Edgeworths, there is also a biographical study called "Mice and Men," by Julian Huxley, and the usual good measure of short stories.

"Air," a journal issued by the Air League of Great Britain, makes a first appearance this month. There are articles on a variety of subjects, all of a popular, non-technical nature.

NEW GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

BRUNSWICK RECORDS

THE West Virginia Glee Club is very good with Negro Spirituals, and their new record is excellent: "Ezekiel saw de wheel" and "Walk in Jerusalem just like John" (3498. 3s.). Virginia Rea and Franklyn Baur, soprano and tenor, sing with two pianos from "Oh, Kay!", "Maybe" and "Someone to watch over me" (3381. 3s.). The following are fox trots at 3s.: "Dancing Tambourine" and "Barbara," Fred Elizade (130); "Feelin' no pain" and "Ida, sweet as apple cider," Red Nichols (3626); "Sometimes I'm happy" and "Hallelujah," Phil Ohman and Victor Arden (3527).

Gift Books

The best selection of Christmas Gift Books is to be seen at the local Branch of W. H. SMITH & SON.



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INSURANCE NOTES.

MONTHLY PREMIUMS AGAIN

SINCE our reference in August last to the possibility of popularizing life assurance by making it easier for the buyer to pay for it, three other offices have announced their willingness to issue Monthly Premium policies.

Whether this move on the part of the life offices has been prompted by the spread of the instalment purchase plan in the retail trade, as has been suggested, we do not know. It cannot, however, be claimed that there is anything new in the idea of monthly premiums. They have in fact been in operation for many years, but for a good reason they have not been adopted extensively for ordinary life policies. The difficulty and annoyance involved hitherto in making these small remittances at frequent intervals have in practice denuded the idea of much of its advantage.

The present revival of interest is centred round a new method of collection, in which the banks play a leading part. Formerly the policy-holder was obliged either to pay each premium over the counter or to incur the expense of a remittance. No renewal notices were issued, so that the patience of the policy-holder was further strained by having to remember the monthly date for payment, or incur a penalty for any omission to do so.

The collection of monthly premiums, however, can now be carried out in a manner which is free of all trouble. This important change is effected by the policy-holder giving a standing order to his banker to pay the premiums and debit his account each month.

Although no receipts are issued for the monthly payments, one receipt for the complete year's premium will be given so that the usual claim for a rebate of Income Tax may be made.

METHODS OF COLLECTION

(1) Legal and General Assurance Society, Ltd.

Method 1. (For those with banking accounts.) An order to the policy-holder's bank to pay to the Society's bank.

Method 2. (For those without banking accounts).

(a) A premium receipt card to be used in towns where the Society has a Branch Office, the card being initialled as a receipt for the premium paid to that office.

(b) A paying-in slip to be used in towns in which the Society has not a Branch Office. The payment can be made to any bank, and the amount will be credited to the Society's account at its London bank.

(2) Phoenix Assurance Co., Ltd.

An order to the policy-holder's banker to pay to the Company's banker.

(3) Clerical, Medical and General Life Assurance Society.

An order to the policy-holder's banker to pay to the Head Office of the Society.

(4) London Life Association, Ltd.

An order to the policy-holder's banker to pay to the Head Office of the Association. The question of remittance direct to the bankers is under consideration.

(5) National Mutual Life Assurance Society (of London).

An order to the policy-holder's banker to pay to the Head Office of the Society.

As the "Legal and General" scheme provides additionally for the man without a banking account, this office should reap a rich reward for its enterprise.

In all cases the balance of the current year's premium would be deducted from the sum assured in the event of a claim. No charge for the privilege of monthly premiums is made by the first two offices referred to above. The "Clerical Medical" considers that an addition of 3 per cent. is essential to preserve equity between policy-holders who pay monthly and those who remit at less frequent intervals. The "London Life" makes a similar charge of about 2½ per cent., and the "National Mutual," 3 per cent. If the annual premium is split into twelve instalments and eleven are paid in arrear, the last one being paid no less than eleven months after the due date, there is a definite loss of interest accompanied by some inevitable extra expense as compared with receiving the whole premium in one sum. This being so we confess that we have some sympathy with the view expressed by the "Clerical Medical."

Finally, it is important to note that the benefits attaching to ordinary policies at annual premiums are unaffected if the premiums are paid monthly, with the exception that in the case of the "Clerical Medical" bonuses cannot be cashed for two years.

Bona-fide readers of THE NATION may address their Insurance queries to our Insurance contributor. Address all communications: "Insurance," THE NATION, 38, Great James Street, Bedford Row, London, W.C.1.

SOMETHING *NEW* IN LIFE ASSURANCE

The Pioneer Monthly Premium Scheme States its Case

THIS modern Scheme, whereby premiums are paid by Monthly Instalments, was instituted by the "Legal & General" in May, 1927, and is operated with the minimum of formality. Here are its chief features:

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2 No "minimum" premium is insisted upon, and therefore any amount may be paid each month.

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4 The Scheme does not require a "minimum Sum Assured," nor is there a "maximum."

5 Payment of Premiums is made automatic by use of Banker's Order. For those without Banking Accounts there is a special system which is automatic and simple.

6 The Society is prepared to consider proposals for Amounts under £2,500, without Medical Examination if desired; and

there is attractive literature for the use of Agents seeking this class of business. Figures show that this method of securing Insurance is well received, and Agents are finding that the old barrier raised by the requirement of a large initial premium is effectively overcome. Increase the business through your Agency! Applications for Agencies invited.

Further particulars and literature will be sent on request.

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Your good or ill,
And the whole colour of your life depends
On this important now."*

Shakespeare has much the same idea when he makes Brutus say in "Julius Caesar":

*"There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which taken at the flood leads on to fortune."*

If you have not made full provision for those dependent upon you, now is the hour on which the colour of your future life depends. Catch the tide and your future will be rosy with the consciousness of duty done and free from anxiety—"omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and in miseries."

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FINANCIAL SECTION

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

A GOVERNMENT OFFER—ORDINARY SHARES V. DEBENTURES—COLUMBIA—P.R.H.A.

THE Government has surprised the City in offering Palestine Government 5 per cent. Stock, 1942-67, guaranteed as to principal and interest by the British Treasury, at 100½. This loan has the same security as British Government funds, yet is priced cheaper than 5 per cent. War Loan. Moreover, as a long-term stock, it is out of keeping with the prevailing price of long-term Government loans, which are on a 4½ per cent. basis. We suggest it is unfair to the British taxpayer to give the Palestine Government the benefit of British Government credit without making any charge. If the British Government re-lent to the Palestine Government at, say, ½ per cent. dearer there would be less criticism of this loan from the taxpayer, but in any case, from the City point of view it has been offered too cheaply.

* * *

A paper read before the Institute of Actuaries this week by Mr. H. E. Raynes, Secretary of the Legal and General Assurance Society, on "The place of ordinary stocks and shares (as distinct from fixed interest-bearing securities) in the investment of life assurance funds," arrives at the conclusion that ordinary shares are better to hold over long periods, both from the point of view of interest and of capital appreciation, than debentures or preference shares. This was the same conclusion reached by Mr. Edgar Lawrence Smith in "Common Stocks as Long-Term Investments," after an investigation of American bond and stock prices over a period of years. Mr. Raynes selected various groups of securities, the debentures of which would, in pre-war days, have figured in the investment list of many insurance companies, and compared the result of an investment in those debentures with that of a like investment in the ordinary stocks or shares of the same companies, over a period of fifteen years from March 31st, 1912, to March 31st, 1927. The groups of securities chosen were (1) British railways; (2) electricity and power companies (British); (3) gas companies (British); (4) iron, coal, and steel; (5) land, finance, and mortgage; (6) shipping; (7) telegraph; (8) financial trusts, and (9) textile and allied companies.

* * *

The actual companies taken in each group were the six British with the largest share capital (ordinary and preference) on March 31st, 1912, provided that they were paying at that time dividends on their ordinary share capital. In cases where there were two or more classes of debentures, the first debentures were chosen, and where there were no debentures, the preference stock or shares. Mr. Raynes assumed that £54,000 was invested in each of the two classes—debentures and ordinary shares—and allocated £6,000 to each of the nine groups and £1,000 to each debenture or preference stock and £1,000 to each ordinary stock. As regards income he discovered that in no year out of the fifteen to 1927 had the income from the ordinary shares fallen as low as that yielded by the debentures or preference shares. The yield from the ordinary shares had always been in excess of 5 per cent. net upon the original investment, and at the end of the period was 6.54 per cent. net. The yield on the debentures or preference shares had been under 3 per cent. for four successive years, and closed the period at 3.30 per cent. net. Only in the case of the railways, gas companies, and iron and steel companies for certain years, was the fixed income ever larger than the income from the ordinary shares.

As regards capital appreciation, Mr. Raynes discovered that the fund representing the ordinary stocks, taking the market value at March 31st, 1927, plus the accumulated excess income from the ordinary stocks over that of debentures, showed practically 100 per cent. appreciation, while the fund representing the debenture investments showed a depreciation of 21 per cent. The figures are as follows:—

Class.	Sum invested in each.	Value of Debenture and Ordinary Pref. Stocks		Value of Ordinary Stocks		Accumulated excess income from Ordinary Shares over Debenture.		Excess of Col. (5) over Col. (2).	
		Mar. 31, 1927.	Mar. 31, 1927.	Mar. 31, 1927.	Mar. 31, 1927.	(3) (4)	(3) (4)		
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(5)		
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
British Railways	6,000	4,413	3,884	981	492				
Electric Light and Power... ..	6,000	5,390	14,741	3,247	12,598				
Gas	6,000	4,558	5,394	580	1,326				
Iron, Coal and Steel	6,000	4,287	4,547	3,680	3,940				
Land Mortgage and Finance	6,000	4,698	12,500	5,144	12,946				
Shipping	6,000	5,105	8,627	4,543	8,167				
Trust Companies	6,000	4,594	10,395	2,081	7,832				
Textile	6,000	4,690	12,822	4,388	12,465				
Telegraph	6,000	4,853	7,251	3,023	5,421				
	54,000	42,588	80,073	27,662	65,287				

* * *

Mr. Raynes concludes that from the point of view of safety a well-spread investment in ordinary shares is a better proposition for the long-term investor than an investment in the debenture issues of the same group of companies. The value of ordinary shares, Mr. Raynes points out, has for its support the material things in which the capital of a company has been sunk—factories, ships, land, &c.; and for income there is the value of the flow of goods and services which the undertaking produces. These have their worth, no matter what happens to the currency. Of course, in a period of currency deflation the debenture holders score because their money income makes a larger proportionate call upon commodities produced while the ordinary shareholders may suffer a reduction in dividends on account of the fall in commodity prices. On the other hand in a period of currency inflation the debenture holder must necessarily suffer as his cash income remains the same, while the ordinary shareholder benefits at his expense since the real costs of production will not, in practice, increase as rapidly as the gross receipts of the company. Mr. Raynes's case for the ordinary shares holds good in our opinion provided a sufficiently long period of years is taken and provided companies are selected which practice the conservative financial policy of applying to reserve each year a proportion of their earnings.

* * *

To come back to the short-term view of markets, we expect irregularity to prevail until the New Year. The pessimistic professed to be disappointed with the interim dividend of Columbia Graphophone which was 10 per cent., against 7½ per cent. in the previous year. But seeing that the Company's dividends from its foreign subsidiaries are not to be received until after March, and that the main profits of the gramophone business are derived from the pre-Christmas months, it would have been unreasonable to expect a larger first interim dividend than 10 per cent. A second interim dividend is to be declared as the present financial period takes in fifteen months.

* * *

The People's Refreshment House Association is asking for further loan capital to finance the expansion of its work of public-house reform. The interest on its 6 per cent. loan stock was covered three and a third times on its last year's net profits derived from the takings of its public-houses. The 6 per cent. loan stock is not quoted on the Stock Exchange, but is a good investment for the small holder.

